

# THE PLAIN VIEW

APRIL 1948

*Religion and Co-operative Ethics* SIR RICHARD GREGORY, Bt., F.R.S.

*Gandhi The Ethicist*

H. S. L. POLAK

*Stanton Coit. A Memoir*

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*Human Personality*

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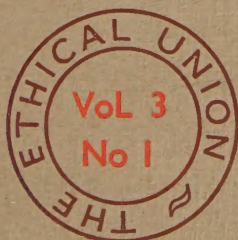
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# THE PLAIN VIEW

A HUMANIST JOURNAL CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RELATIONS AND WITH  
THE QUALITY OF LIVING

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Οὐδεν ἱκανὸν ὦ ὀλίγον το ἱκανόν

—EPICURUS

*Nothing is sufficient for him to whom what is sufficient seems little*

UBERTATES ET COPIAE VIRTUTIS

—CICERO

*the productiveness and the resources of human quality*

THIS IS THAT WHICH WILL INDEED DIGNIFY AND EXALT KNOWLEDGE, IF  
CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION MAY BE MORE NEARLY AND STRAITLY  
CONJOINED AND UNITED TOGETHER THAN THEY HAVE BEEN; A  
CONJUNCTION LIKE UNTO THAT OF THE TWO HIGHEST PLANETS, SATURN  
THE PLANET OF REST AND CONTEMPLATION, AND JUPITER, THE PLANET  
OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACTION.

—BACON

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P733 v. III.

*What the plain view perceives is neither obvious nor obscure*

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## COMMENTARY

**T**HE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE. Even school histories do not teach nowadays that the power of conscience can remove mountains of iniquity; that the glory of its operations is to be seen in the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of labour, of women, and of colonial peoples, the humane and intelligent treatment of children, of lunatics, and of criminals, and in other such triumphs of man's humanity to man. It is recognized that these achievements are produced by the intricate interaction of many causes, of which some are accidental: agitation and organized pressure and direct action are influences which mix with increased knowledge and technical competence, improved administration and economic change, in a complex context which can never be exhaustively analysed. But conscience, like propaganda in war, has been a powerful weapon in the attack on abuses of power, and like propaganda in war has undermined resistance, so that once the enemy begins to give way under the fury of resolute attack, morale is impaired and collapse is quick. In 1741, Warburton wrote of Hobbes: "The philosopher of Malmesbury was the terror of the last age. . . . The press sweat with controversy; and every young Churchman militant would needs try his arms in thundering upon Hobbes's steel-cap." Put Marx in the place of Hobbes as the arch-disturber of thought and conscience, and you have the same situation after two generations of debate, his influence triumphant and young men regularly overthrowing him as a matter of course with more or less skill in their school exercises. The nature of Marx's influence has been noted by many, and is thus described by Professor Carr in his recent book, *The Soviet Impact on the Western World*: "The serious thing about the contemporary revolution is not that Marxism has kindled and inflamed the resentments of the underprivileged against the existing order and helped to make them articulate: the serious thing is that it has undermined the self-confidence of the privileged by sapping their own faith in the sincerity and efficacy of the principles on which their moral authority rested."

The part which conscience has played in liberal and revolutionary movements for some five or six generations now, is different from the part it has to play in this next phase of social achievements and consolidation. The recognized task and problem of the contemporary world is to organize security, national and personal security from want and from violence, a task which adds up to world organization of plenty for all. This immense rationalization of human affairs presupposes that the political struggles can be



mitigated, abated, and put under control by accepted procedures promptly and faithfully worked; in others words, that the Marxist vision of the supersession of politics by administration is in some measure feasible and not altogether utopian. The most impressive argument against Communist theory and practice is that it is an approach which perpetuates politics, increases their violence, and makes the transition to administration exceedingly remote. Insistence on violence, fanatical orthodoxy, unitary control, and absolute claims necessarily forces politics *à outrance* on all and excludes every other possibility. This is the most elementary, the most important, the most often repeated lesson which history teaches. British experience shows that it is a lesson not always lost. In this critical time the social conscience is focussed on the need for the establishment, acceptance, and faithful working of institutions and procedures for dealing with all claims, and on the need for competence and efficiency in all work and every office.

In spite of the frantic irrationalism which has run riot in our time (not thinking it unnecessary to use reason in its own defence), reason is due to play a larger and more decisive part in human affairs than ever before. It is of course the kind of response which is necessary to human survival, but also it is actually taking effect. To say that the class war developed in default of the development of appropriate and adequate administrative organs of State (and the same may be said of the French Revolution), or that the violence of National Socialism was the despair of millions of unorganized lives, these may be truisms or they may be exaggerations, but they indicate the truth that administrative skill and invention can make history and save mankind. Successful organization of human affairs is a matter of politics, that is to say, of organized wills; but it is also a matter of brains, of experience, of establishing habits and inventing techniques and maturing procedures. To think exclusively in terms of politics is a mistake; to separate politics from administration is impracticable: to concentrate attention upon administration, to recognize that in this field science can give man the mastery he fatally lacks, this is sound and possible and offers a major hope of putting politics under the control of reason. It is dangerous to ignore the struggle for power; it is even more dangerous to ignore the possibility and the method of organizing its relaxation.

The incubus of a massive administrative superstructure, the immense ossification of a highly-organized society, this is what frightens some people more than the violence of politics or the insecurity of unregulated trade and industry. That is foolish and short-sighted, both because the alternatives are more destructive

and completely negative, leaving the essential problem untouched, and also because there is no necessary reason why the highly-developed administrative machine should not deliver the goods, viz., material necessities and luxuries, health, education, liberty, leisure, and multiplied opportunities for individual enjoyments and pursuits. The point is that it can and that nothing else can, and that the alternatives are indefinitely mischievous and destructive. Of course, State administration still carries many of the disadvantages of having been designed on principles which are obstructive to present-day purposes. But adaptations, innovations, improvements, occur unnoticed daily; the lag is serious and could be fatal, but the lag in public opinion is greater, less excusable, and can be equally fatal: for in this close organization of the social life the intelligent individual co-operation of the public is the essence of the whole matter; revolutionary idealism, partisan zealotry, become regressive, extremely rash, wanton sabotage of human welfare; what is wanted is the most conscientious efficiency and the most scrupulous good faith and active intelligence in accepting the discipline and working the procedures and programmes prescribed by competent authorities, professional and civic. A change of conscience is demanded of progressives and conservatives alike. There need be no yes-men, but rebels against the fundamental order are all in danger because they endanger all: the only alternative to regimentation in the present state of society is rigorous self-discipline informed and sustained by explicit understanding and mutual confidence; and these conditions are created by personal missionary influence and example.

**C**LASS. The exacerbated class-consciousness of late years, with its taboos and superstitions, has confused thinking about class and class relations. There is no necessary reason why different social classes should not subsist together with mutual appreciation and advantage; and since the idea of a classless society is a political myth, it is more rational and profitable to concentrate attention upon the conditions and policies which promise the integration and harmony of classes, rather than to dream and talk of the elimination of all differences. When, according to present intentions, several generations have been educated according to aptitude and capacity on a footing of social equality, then present classes based on family status and hereditary wealth and privileged schooling will in so far as the policy is effective have lost their monopoly and their prestige. There will remain, inevitably and indefinitely, a radical distinction between the dynamic professional



type with high intellectual capacity, drive, and stability, living at a fast tempo a planned, well-managed life sustained and directed by personal initiatives, and the simpler person making the great majority who do their day's work and pursue their hobbies, taking the life that comes. With a high level of production in an advanced stable society, the lot of the majority may well be more enviable than that of the dynamic minority who carry the greater share of responsibility. The "century of the common man" means not merely nor mainly the pooled power of the common man but rather his command of all goods and the means of a good life. The experts who in a multitude of offices and occupations serve him as the gentleman was served in an earlier régime are bound to demand and get higher incomes and will naturally seek advantageous conditions for themselves and their children. There is no harm in this so long as equality of educational opportunity is jealously maintained, and if segregation of social castes and types is avoided. In our national policies for health and education services and in the town planning policy of mixed neighbourhood units there is the attempt to achieve the right conditions for the emergence of new classes within a framework of social unity. The point is to make these policies really work out; and to get rid of humbug is not the least necessary preliminary.

**D**E ANTIQUITATE AC POSTERITATE. (*Preprinted without permission in anticipation of the PLAIN VIEW for April, 2948.*)

The most remarkable ritual performance of the Christian Church used to take place in the open air on fine days in summer, usually on a village green in the near neighbourhood of the church. Eleven participants, representing the faithful disciples of Christ, clothed in spotless white, would undertake to defend against attack the doctrine of the Trinity, represented by three straight and equal stakes driven upright into the ground and bracketed into unity by a cross-piece on top. The attack was delivered by one of another eleven participants using a leather ball, and the defender used a bat to repel the ball. The other ten of the attacking eleven stood decorously about to cover the field so that the ball might be returned promptly to keep up the attack. When the ball got past the defender and broke the Trinity, he walked sadly away and his place was taken by another champion. Two identical symbols of the Trinity were set up at an interval of twenty-two yards and the ball pitched at each alternately six times in series until all the defenders had failed to save the doc-



trine. It is a matter of difference amongst authorities whether the six throws represented the six days of creation or the six articles of faith enjoined under a statute of Henry VIII. Whether the twenty-two yards between the two Trinities represented the twenty-two chapters of the book of Revelation or the special significance of the twenty-second Psalm is also a matter of considerable argument. The most fascinating problem is to discover the reason for the duplication of the Trinity and of the eleven disciples. Obviously this point is close to the heart of the whole intention in this ritual. Perhaps the most plausible speculation is that it represents a subtle, solid, and exultant answer to the Manichean heresy.

When the disciples had all failed to defend the doctrine, the rôles were reversed and the attackers put upon their defence, until in turn they too all succumbed. This enacted the course of debate and represented the fallibility and inconclusiveness of all human argument, pointing to the necessity of faith. However, to maintain the interest of the participants, often throughout the course of a long summer's day, the defenders would hit the ball as hard as they could and whilst it was being returned would run to and fro over the twenty-two yards between the Trinities, counting their runs to the credit of their cause, a procedure reminiscent of the counting of heads in the democratic elections of those times. By this means the ritual came to be much enjoyed and elaborated for its own sake. With the decline of the Christian Church it was first given a new psychological interpretation and then became a purely secular game, which continued in use until the year in which Britons were declared mature and all games were abolished.

This interesting ritual became so identified with the whole Christian religion that many Englishmen when they said that this was a Christian country meant that Englishmen performed and loved cricket, as it was called, and stood for all that it stood for; so that if one were tempted to do something he thought dishonourable he would say, "No, it isn't cricket." The emotional sanction which it gave to conduct derived from the religious enthusiasm with which it was performed: it transcended itself, securing the greatest triumph of the essence and power of ritual that history records; it became more than a cult, itself a religion, a mystery, and a way of life. One has only to read old books in which the performance is lovingly described to feel the indefinable ethos which it created, and to understand the nostalgia of the exiled Englishman of those days and the secret of his taciturnity and reserve. It would, of course, be quite impossible to reinstate to-day the power and meaning of this venerable ritual and the world of sentiment and conduct which it sustained.

## RELIGION AND CO-OPERATIVE ETHICS

THE essential principle in religion is faith in the existence of external spiritual powers or actions which transcend natural laws of life. Whatever the faith may be, loyalty to it binds believers together and separates them from infidels. It demands, above all other things, homage to divine influences or a Supreme Being, and is not necessarily concerned with ways of living, moral codes or systems of philosophy. In this sense, spiritual communion, explicit or implied, and conformity with practices pertaining to it, define communities into Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and other religious groups independently of human conduct or social conditions. It is only when worship of the divine is associated with the enlightenment and advancement of the human race by material works that science can be reconciled with religion in the ideal of duty or service in a noble struggle and a great hope.

There has always been a difference between the religious and scientific attitudes of mind and always will be, because the outlook of one is defined by fixed doctrines while that of the other is continually changing. Worship is as natural an instinct as hunger, and it finds expression in many forms of religion. Just as definite in human nature, and side by side with it in the history of civilization, is the constructive instinct manifested in the arts and associated with knowledge of the natural properties and agencies discovered by observation and experiment.

All that early man knew about natural laws were their influence and effects; and like other living creatures he had to adapt himself to them in order to survive. His primary needs were food, clothing and shelter, and he lived where he could obtain these things for himself and his family. Instinctive feelings, coupled with the volition to move from one place to another, lead living creatures from insects to man to form social communities in which every member has a part to play. Such communities can be preserved only by co-operative effort, which in animals generally means specialised labour and functions, and in man the acceptance of principles of government for the common good.

With social insects like bees, wasps and ants, these principles have become crystalized into instinctive habits and have no relation to the freedom of consciousness. The statutes and regulations made by human legislators are very different from these more or less mechanical responses to external influences. They prescribe codes of conduct enacted for the common good of the community for which they are enacted, and institute penalties for offences against them. Unlike universal natural laws, the rules recognized



by any community as binding and necessary to preserve the social structure vary in time and place. A working and worthy "way of life" may be based upon moral or ethical principles, as in Confucianism, or may be associated with a Supreme Being, as in Hebraism, Christianity and Islam. In each case certain observances and rules of conduct are prescribed, but whereas an offence against secular law becomes a crime, a transgression against the spiritual decrees of a religious authority is a sin.

The authority or sanction for law is social custom, and this applies to sacred as well as to secular regulations. In most societies at one time or another religious duties are as much an integral part of the code of legal statutes as other principles recognized by the members of a community as being for the common good. While, however, every religion sanctifies its own doctrines and observances, these differ widely from one another and among themselves. No one can reasonably hope for, or expect, an amalgamation of these various faiths in which each loses its distinctive character, any more than there can ever be a uniform code of conformity to custom. There are, however, certain basic principles of human conduct essential for the collective security of every society, and these may, or may not, be included in religious sanctions.

The rights and duties of man everywhere constitute the common ground upon which all peoples can meet in fellowship whatever their faith may be in divine powers, or with none. The prime factor is the Golden Rule concerning relations of man to man—Do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you. This sublime ethical conception is to be found in all the sayings of all the living religions of the world and in the earliest stages of civilized life. As a moral principle its high standard is difficult of attainment among individuals or communities, but it is nevertheless a fundamental note to which the strings of all human hearts are able to respond. It is the core of right social relationships, by whatever strands of faith in man or divinity the rope may be entwined.

Though man is a separate natural species, individuals and types vary so greatly in their qualities and circumstances that no particular religious faith can ever become universal in its doctrines. From infancy, thoughts and emotions in every country are polarized in directions determined by fixed ideas and customs, which become laws of right social and religious behaviour long before they are inscribed in statutory codes. There is little difference in many societies between doctrines made sacrosanct by their association with religion and rules of co-operative conduct which members of a community are expected to observe in affairs of everyday life.

The essential feature of the civic organization of Sumeria, the

earliest district of ancient Babylonia of which documents have survived, was its religious character. The most comprehensive code of Laws of Hammurabi, who was king of Babylon about 2000 B.C., is represented upon inscribed tablets as being received from the hands of Shamash, the Sun-God. This code brought together laws and customs which had been in existence in Sumeria many centuries before it was compiled. It makes provision in detail for every contingency which might be expected to arise in the daily life of the community and in the relations of its members, and is a remarkable document of legislative skill in enactment.

Much of the legislation of the Hebrews recorded in the early books of the Bible is closely connected with Hammurabi's Code, if not directly derived from it. The idea of a creative deity as the original law-giver is common to both, and also to other social and moral codes. Traditional learning, combined with superstition, leads to different conceptions of the Supreme God and His relations to Man and different systems of worship. The cultivation of credulity regarding the supernatural is an element of most religions, primitive or advanced, and most people are content that this should be so. When, however, the superstitious aspect predominates, it is usually associated with clerical authority over ways of living in preparation for life to come and a passive attitude towards material conditions of existence. From a humanistic point of view the civilizing influence of religion is not to be found in strict observance of doctrine and ritual but in what it does to promote righteous thought and action among members of the community and ensure progressive social enlightenment.

In theistic religions, conceptions of God represent standards of perfection by which devout believers strive to shape their lives. Doctrines and creeds crystallize these ideals, and they vary in time, place and circumstance. Ethical ideals, like forms in the organic world, similarly undergo development and differ according to chronological period, geographical distribution and social environment. In the beginning they derive their compelling force from reference to the claims and needs of a given form of society, and afford no guidance for conduct between man inside and man outside the group. Any form of belief can be judged by its influence in creating a desire to attain high ethical ideals. The process and the standard may vary, but if they result in the individual or the general good they are helping human development by making men understand that they must help themselves.

Whatever the nature or grace with which he is endowed, man has freedom of will and action and is therefore the potential master of his fate; and his justification is not to be measured by unreason-



ing faith in creed or doctrine, but by his life and works. In the highest sense of Christian teaching, service to God means individual and corporate co-operation with Him in fulfilling a divine purpose in the scheme of a universe in which life is an experiment and man a stage in it.

There is no question here of personal reward for goodness or punishment for evil, but only encouragement to work for a higher human destiny, and thus render service to a divine spirit and to man. It is unnecessary to define God if this ideal is accepted as the purpose of man's existence; and a rationalist can endeavour to live up to its standard of goodness even though his philosophy does not include a divine personality.

Religion expresses the collective ideals of a society, and its ethical or moral influence results from active co-operation with the spirit of this sentiment. All categories of thought, including that of science, may thus be regarded as of religious origin: they are all concerned with the realities and meaning of Nature, man and society. Scientific thought is thus only a form of religious thought derived from further knowledge. Philosophy accepts the fact of religion and the influence of religious faith, and it seeks to understand them in spirit and in truth and to promote what is good for human welfare in both. With increase of knowledge, much of the mystery upon which religious speculations are based is revealed, and new ideals or gods have to be constructed to satisfy the rational mind. It is only when there is a refusal to recognize this essential function of progressive knowledge that conflict arises between natural and supernatural philosophies.

Goodness is as difficult to define as beauty. When it is associated with religion it becomes Godliness and its standards of sanctity vary in time and place. If the biological principles of variation of character, struggle for existence, and survival of the fittest are applied to social evolution, then, at any stage of civilization, good conduct is that which conforms to what is conceived to be high social ideals and evil is that which is in conflict with them. Good acts are distinguished by their adjustment to the social order, and bad by their failure. Good conduct falls within the order: bad conduct fails to adjust itself and is condemned. Conduct is determined by character, and character in man implies action guided by a will conscious of moral or ethical standards. It may thus be distinguished from the instinctive or unconscious impulse which, in other creatures, represents reaction to a physical stimulus.

In the course of his biological evolution, man has become possessed of an erect posture, the power of visual convergence, and the co-ordination of the sense of hearing with the muscles of articula-

tion, by which his range of speech has been greatly extended. By the use of these characteristics he has been able to emancipate himself from the limitation imposed upon him by Nature and to create a world of his own. He has thus superimposed an artificial life upon his natural life, and introduced a process of cultural evolution which is independent of natural conditions, except in so far as they may be used for his own ends. Like other creatures he inherits certain instincts, but every human being has to acquire knowledge and wisdom for himself.

By the exercise of their instincts, such social insects as bees and ants carry on their marvellous communal work from one generation to another, but always in the same natural way, and only where natural conditions are favourable for their existence. Each new generation of insects can survive only if it is born under these conditions; and the children of men are no better provided for in their infancy. In civilized communities they come into being in circumstances which are purely artificial, while their inherited instincts are purely natural.

The biological characters of civilized man are the same as they were six thousand years ago, in spite of all individual and social attainments. Each generation starts with the same natural instincts, yet each has to learn afresh to adapt itself to an imposed environment, and to acquire a new consciousness of what is good or evil. The social and cultural conditions change, but human nature remains in most respects unaltered, except perhaps in the capacity to learn and the means of passing on wisdom and knowledge to succeeding generations. The only sense in which we can truly say that we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors is that we can see more of their achievements and are provided with more powerful weapons to subdue Nature, both materially and spiritually.

From a practical point of view what constitutes right behaviour thus varies with cultural conditions, and its character is represented in time and space in the story of civilization. What man is in himself and what are the ideals of righteousness, are conceptions which have largely influenced the course of human development and been the roots of progressive effort. The ethics of human conduct taught by Confucius in the sixth century B.C. has as its basis the belief that the nature of man was innately good and by instruction and example could be prevented from degeneration. His moral code was a way of life to which high ethical principles were applied without association with religious doctrine and completely opposed to the idea that man is "born in sin and shapen in iniquity." It made virtue and morality a matter of knowledge and example sanctioned



by society on the elements of goodness within human nature itself, instead of seeking guidance from supernatural influences.

In all ethical systems and in all high religions certain elements of "Goodness" or virtue are esteemed, and the purpose of education is to nurture them. In the Homeric period of Greek history the virtues were bravery, reverence, prudence and temperance; and an advanced stage of ethical culture was attained by the teaching of them. Socrates taught that right "knowledge is virtue," while Aristotle held that the aim of teaching should be not the virtue of knowledge but happiness or goodness, which in the individual meant "well-being" and to the community "well doing." Religion had little effective influence on these and other educational philosophies of classical Greece and Rome, whereas the lofty conceptions of religion and morality were combined with practical purpose in ancient Hebrew education. With these nations, however, intellectual education was confined to certain classes, and all other peoples were regarded as inferior.

This is true notwithstanding the broad democratic ideals of the period which culminated in the "Golden Age" of Pericles, in which the aims were to promote individual development and emphasize human interests so as to live happily and beautifully without arbitrary control by the Gods or the State. The Sophists were missionaries whose horizon extended beyond that of their own State, and they travelled from one place to another to impart instruction in their principles. To Protagoras—one of their greatest leaders—is attributed the formula "Man is the measure of all things," which implies that morals are conventional ethics and the standard of their value is utility. The School of the Stoics, founded by Zeno of Citium, laid stress upon moral principles, but taught that reason alone could determine a life of virtue as well as of wisdom and physical health. The Universe was regarded as a rational, though material, whole in which all men were reasonable beings and had, therefore, mutual philanthropic relationships.

In the emphasis they laid on the brotherhood of man the Stoics made their ethical principles transcend political boundaries and paved the way for Christianity in conjunction with the Jewish concept of the equality of man before God, which had taken the place of earlier tribal parochialism. Socrates differed from the Sophists in regarding man not in the sense of a single individual, but as the expression of a rational and universal self in which truth is knowledge so far as man can understand it, and knowledge is the basis of practical and moral worth. Plato agreed with Socrates that virtue consisted in knowledge, but sought for universal truth in

“ideas”; and “good” was the harmony of them with objective realities.

The basic principles of Christian ethics, are the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, but what are esteemed as virtues and what are condemned as vices have varied greatly even in Christendom. Though the distinctive attributes of Christian ethics are said to be obedience, unworldliness, benevolence, purity and humility, these and other measures of ethical behaviour are common to all high religions and are included among educational ideals. Their recognitions and applications have marked the course of civilization, even though service to them has been interpreted variously by different peoples and in different parts of the world. In mediaeval times the seven deadly sins were personified as Pride, Lechery, Envy, Anger, Covetousness, Gluttony and Sloth. Several of these would scarcely be called deadly sins to-day; and the list omits murder and adultery.

The seven principle virtues are said to be Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. The first three are called Theological Virtues, and the other four Cardinal Virtues. What are conventionally regarded as sacred virtues or deadly sins depend, however, upon the community which itself decides the standards of ethical values. Truth, beauty and goodness have varying degrees of perfection in the human mind, but in the pursuit of them man has exercised his noblest impulses.

In Christian philosophy, appreciation of all or any of these virtues and qualities, and attainment of excellence in their service, are measured not so much in terms of social ethics as by adoration of perfection in a life to come. The aim of early Christian schools of thought was spiritual rather than intellectual, and the ideals of “well-being” and “well-doing” were not for worldly but for other-worldly preparation. This resulted in a period of stagnation in education and social ethics, relieved only by the influence of a few great Christian philosophers, of whom the English Venerable Bede was an outstanding intellectual example. He was not only the greatest historian and theologian of his time, but also a scientist who made personal observations on natural phenomena and referred many of them to natural causes.

In the age of chivalry of the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, duty to noble service gave refinement to the character of the warrior. Love, honour, loyalty and piety were esteemed as major virtues, and courtesy, courage, obedience and respect for women as minor. The aims of the period of scholasticism were to bring the Christian faith into harmony with reason. In the same period Saracen learning was brought to Christian Europe through the Crusades, and it



awakened the scientific spirit of freedom of thought, understanding and speech. With the Renaissance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries this spirit influenced ethical ideals and made reason the guide to truth.

The Humanities next came to mean the study of classical languages and literature—of words instead of objective realities. Even when modern languages became vehicles of expression, verbal realism was the measure of knowledge. So it remained until in the seventeenth century Francis Bacon made an organized system of inductive philosophy a means of providing physical, moral and social development through direct observation and experiment and rational understanding of their natural meaning.

The principles of moral and social development admit of scientific study, and the science of ethics is concerned with the discovery of their characters and influences. Unlike principles of the natural sciences, they cannot, however, represent common agreement relating to verifiable knowledge. When derived from relationships between man and his environment they vary according to cultural conditions, and though their influences may be compared, their systems cannot be referred to absolute standards of measurement.

There have been many such ethical standards during the past six thousand years of what is called civilized life, and the record of them belongs to the history of human culture. Mesopotamia has a long cultural history extending over three thousand years or more, but when once the cultural pattern was fixed, depending as it did on the character of the environment, it suffered little fundamental change. Other conditions of natural surroundings, and the power of man to bring natural forces and resources into human service, have resulted in other civilizations, each of its own kind and surviving so long as it was best adapted to existing human needs and concepts.

After two thousand years of Christian teaching it has to be confessed that the nations which have received it are little better in their moral qualities than others in the past or the present. This is not an indictment of principles but of the failure of peoples to follow them as shown by the lag between advances in science and moral attitude towards them. The gap will be lessened when works for material welfare are thought as necessary for conditions of life here and now as belief in particular sacred doctrines, with both science and religion combining in spirit as service to high ideals. All who work for the mental and material betterment of the human race are co-operating in a common cause, to whatever other principles they are attached. The professed religious faith of a nation or

country, and the authority exercised through it, afford no measure of the moral and social conditions of the mass of the people. Culture is a complex of many elements and many forms of response to divine influences. In its application to human societies it signifies the state of refinement of mind, manners and interests in relation to the needs of the spirit as well as of the body.

No one has ever questioned that the higher manifestations of the spirit are essential factors of human development, whatever may be his advancement in the field of material welfare. Supreme ethical concepts are common to humanity at large, whether bound to a specific form of religious belief or not. We know that these qualities are part of the make-up of mankind, and that consciousness of them persists at different levels of moral judgment in individuals and in groups, but it is as difficult to define the course of their development in terms of "goodness" as it is to distinguish between what is essentially sacred and what secular in the emotional impulses and reactions of religion. What is known is that civilized peoples are aware of this consciousness and by the exercise of it they can depart from the principle of Nature "red in tooth and claw" to which all other forms of life are subject and have to submit. They have, however, still much to learn and do before this principle of biological competition among nations can approach the conditions of symbiotic co-operation in which each lives its own life but is of service to the other.

We have far to go before the moral laws which determine the rights and duties of a community are extended to bind the peoples of the world together for their common welfare. Modern or western civilization, with science and the Christian religion as its distinctive cultural characteristics, has reached a stage when such an understanding is imperative to preserve itself from dissolution. Salvation cannot be hoped for or expected, either from the suppression of scientific discovery and its applications or by the expression of evangelical fervour. Workers in all these fields can, however, combine in the common cause of promoting moral as well as material goodness of life, each in its own way and all with noble human values. These high ideals are shared by science with art and religion and their principles do not become less exalted because they are often neglected or abused.

Measured by standards of cultural refinement and peaceful purpose, the pattern of civilization in China two thousands years before the Christian era stands out prominently in the history of the world; and it remained unaltered until modern times. It was a stable form of Society but non-progressive in regard to the acquisition of new natural knowledge or to increase of power derivable from it for ser-

vice in peace or war. It constituted a code of behaviour in which restraint, moderation and courtesy, a tranquil and reasonable attitude, strict control of the emotions and no violence or passion, were the disciplinary elements.

Regard for these virtues and codes of conduct based upon them, determine the place of a people or a nation on the scale of spiritual refinement and belong to secular humanism, whether associated with sacred faiths or not. The promotion of ethical and intellectual enlightenment, and the adjustment of social conditions to their formative influences are civilizing movements which are as essential factors in the evolution of religious systems as they are first principles of humanistic teaching. RICHARD GREGORY

## GANDHI THE ETHICIST

**B**Y ethicist, I do not mean that Gandhi was an agnostic or a non-religionist. He drew inspiration from all the great religions. Their Scriptures were familiar to him. Their common teaching of right thought, right speech, and right action was the Truth.

He lived by intuition. From that, sooner or later, he drew arguments from reason. He put his thoughts so derived not into plausible speech, but into words by which he sought to express that which had become true to him. But, again, intellectual conviction, couched in suitable language, was merely the beginning. He could not rest until he was living what he understood to be the right life, and he knew that he could carry no conviction to others unless he practised what he preached.

The "simple life" teaching came to him overnight, from a reading of Ruskin's "Unto This Last." Immediately, he set to work to give it practical shape, and at his settlements in South Africa he learnt to use the spinning-wheel and the hand-loom, to cultivate the soil as a humble peasant, to do the scavenging as the lowly Indian "untouchable."

His "non-violent" doctrine was in the blood and in the custom with which he was familiar from childhood. But Tolstoy stimulated it anew, as from one ex-soldier to another—for Gandhi had been the Sergeant-Major leader of an Indian Ambulance Corps in the Boer War. But mere abstention from violence did not quite fulfil his purpose. Positive action was needed, and this he found in his belief in the *power* of Truth—*Satyagraha*—which he felt certain could overturn the mountains of oppression, hostility, and the various evils which barred the way to human



progress and self-realization. His use of civil disobedience—strengthened by Thoreau's argument that a man must be true to his own conscientious conviction at any cost, even though this might temporarily alienate his fellow-citizens—was intended not merely as a negative weapon, but as a striving, by personal sacrifice, to appeal to his opponent's conscience and so release the latent good in society.

Unpractical or idealistic as his arguments and methods may often have been or appeared to be, there was always a practical purpose in them. His campaign to open the Hindu temples to the "untouchables" was intended to cleanse Hinduism from an impurity which disgraced it, as well as to elevate these lowly and despised folk to the rank of equal citizens, capable (as many "untouchable" saints had demonstrated in the past, as well as Dr. Ambedkar, in these days) of rising to the greatest heights. His advocacy of village handicraft arose from a recognition of the wasteful leisure among the agricultural classes during the many months when cultivation is impossible. Besides disciplining him, it would enable the poorest villager to clothe and support himself at a trifling cost; and it would help to prevent the drift from the villages to the towns from sheer economic necessity.

His work for Hindu-Muslim unity, apart from a desire to promote communal peace, was derived from a knowledge that nine Muslims out of ten were of Hindu descent, that in the multitudinous villages of India they were interdependent and ordinarily on good terms with each other, and that the creative power of brotherhood would build up the Indian nation to a height which would be an inspiration to the world and a keystone in the edifice of world-unity.

His support of the feminist cause in his Motherland was one of the most significant of his activities. It had begun already in South Africa, when he had urged his wife and other Indian women to undergo the hardships of imprisonment in the great Passive Resistance Struggle that he led there for seven years. It was not for nothing that he had studied the women's suffrage movement in this country. He was convinced that, since the Divine Power expressed itself in male and female alike, it was a denial of first principles to exclude women from the offices and responsibilities of citizenship. But for him, it is probable that the backwardness of Indian women in their country's service would have been almost as bad to-day as it was a third of a century ago, when he finally returned to the Motherland.

He never failed to connect practice with precept or to adopt simple, direct action easily understood by the humblest folk. The

common man of the village, multiplied by 400 millions, was not merely the object of his compassion, but the brick to be built into the sacred edifice of nationhood. The universal mourning at his death is the striking monument to the success—if only partial—of his lifelong effort.

Many years ago in Johannesburg, he told me that the one great fault of his countrymen, which he felt called upon to help to correct, was their fear of the foreign rulers. His whole purpose, upon his return to India, was to remove this fear which, in his view, was a slur upon his people and upon the rulers alike. He was confident that, until Indians had learnt to look fearlessly to the future and to undertake the burdens and the sacrifices of citizenship, they could never attain to it or earn their freedom; nor would the rulers show themselves at their highest stature. His belief in the power of the spirit was unbreakable, and when Indian independence was achieved—unhappily, by the creation of *two* Dominions, each enjoying complete independence—he felt that his belief had been justified.

To him the doctrine of *Karma* was no excuse for weakness. It was a recognition that we reap what we have sown, that no one but ourselves is responsible for our misfortunes, and that evil conditions can be fertilised by good feeling and right conduct, until creative purpose is served and a new world is built. We in the West have much, indeed, to learn from this teaching that out of evil may well come good!

H. S. L. POLAK

## STANTON COIT—1857-1944

[*This article is part of a prefatory memoir which will shortly appear with a selection from the writings of Stanton Coit in a memorial volume.*]

### I

‘**E**VERY occurrence . . . has been to me an occasion for venture into that ideal realm which sets the mind free from both hope and fear, asks for nothing but loyalty, appeals only to our creative impulse, gives no guarantee of success and rebukes no incapacity to achieve.” In the autobiography which at the end of his life he set out to write, Stanton Coit characteristically found the occasion to say this before he had travelled beyond the second paragraph. In a later chapter, towards the end of this unpublished fragment, he says more about his conception of this ideal realm and about the hold which it had upon him. “My defence of my belief in the ideal despite its failure to dominate nature and man,

rests upon the peculiar relationship which according to my interpretation holds between the inner life and the out-going effort to make the world better. There is such a thing as loyalty to principle and to the ideal of society even if all effort to do good proves vain and even if not only the present state of mankind is impenetrably dark, but also the distant future is hopeless. Most persons who under such circumstance remain loyal to principle console themselves by believing that in the course of time some supernatural power will cause right to triumph over wrong. I remember that, before I had ventured far into the meaning of this problem, I used often to repeat to myself James Russell Lowell's lines: 'Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne, But that scaffold sways the future . . .', and so on. I soon asked myself, however: 'Suppose wrong is to remain for ever on the throne, shall we on that account accept it as our god?' My answer to my question was and is that in the spiritual life there are a higher realm and a lower, that the realm where hope for the future is the wellspring of our energy is the lower, that in the higher, although we never cease from active effort, we are no more perturbed by evil that is to come than by evil which has already passed into oblivion. We transcend not only the past and present but the future of man. There is a life which is above hope as well as above fear; and it intensifies instead of relaxing the impulse to make the world better. This life is wholly ethical, trusting exclusively in the inherent worth of goodness. When I recently read to a friend that passage in the first chapter of this book in which I speak of devotion to the ideal as setting us free from hope and fear, my friend exclaimed: 'But, surely you do not wish to set the world free from hope; for if that were gone, the mainspring to human action would be lacking!' My answer was that **what-ought-to-be**, although it never is to be, is a more than adequate inspiration, and that we need no reassurance as to the outcome of our effort; whereas hope, when adversity confronts us, transforms itself into fear, and, when hope is strongest, it is most misleading and most prone to delusion and to blindness. Accordingly, when I reiterate that spirit is supreme, I do not mean that it is all-powerful or that it is certain of triumph in the long run, but merely that the eternal values which spirit discerns, however weak and ineffectual, are inherently worthy of supreme devotion."

When he says, in the first of the passages quoted, "every occurrence has been to me an occasion for venture into that ideal realm," he is looking back over a long life dominated by one supreme interest and conviction. For he says elsewhere in the same fragment, and it is one of the things he gloried in saying, and said



often: "I cannot detect that my innate capacity has made any progress from the earliest years which I can remember to the present day, nor can I discover any change of direction from childhood to old age in the kind of interests which have spontaneously attracted me. Furthermore, after the closest recollection and introspection, I find no evidence that the shiftings of environment from home-life in Ohio to college days in Massachusetts, thence to Berlin for my university studies, with travel in Europe and through England and back to New York City, and then to London for the rest of my days, have been determining factors either in my outlook upon life or in the career which I have pursued . . . at eighty I am to a monotonous degree exactly the same person I was at eight."

In these passages his spiritual portrait is sketched with a few strokes accomplished by his own hand. This is the man. This was he in his boyhood's home in Ohio, in his college at Amherst, in his self-dedication to the Ethical Movement, in the public stand which he took in social affairs, in his creation of the Ethical Church, in his translation of the *Ethik* of Nicolai Hartmann, and, above all, in the serenity of his last days of disappointment and grief. ("Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it.") This was his witness from the beginning to the end, seasonable and unseasonable, buoyant and persistent, like Epictetus. In this he was a stoic again, like Emerson before him. The child was father of the man, and his days were bound each to each by ethical piety . . .

## II

. . . It is clear that Coit's ethical idealism was formed and fixed before he went to meet and to hear Felix Adler in New York, and two years later to study in Germany the critical philosophy of Kant. These steps gave him his life's work in the Ethical Movement and the intellectual training which enabled him to develop and teach his lifelong convictions. It is worth mentioning that Georg von Gizycki, his teacher in Berlin, became his friend and a collaborator in the Ethical Movement.

On his way back to New York he spent three months at Toynbee Hall, at that time a new foundation doing pioneer educational and social work in the slums. This kind of work—it was itself an ethical movement with a Christian inspiration—appealed strongly to Coit. He had an exceptional power of attracting, stimulating, and influencing young men, and his most directly successful work was done in this field of Neighbourhood Guilds, as he called them. On returning to take up his appointment as Adler's assistant in

the New York Ethical Society, he devoted himself to the promotion of a Neighbourhood Guild in the slums of New York City. Some two years later when he came in succession to Moncure Conway to the South Place Ethical Society in London, the Guild consisted of six clubs and a kindergarten. He had planted the idea in American soil and it had taken root. In London he started a Neighbourhood Guild in Kentish Town. In two-and-a-half years, from the smallest beginnings it had developed five clubs, with a circulating library, Sunday afternoon free concerts, Sunday evening lectures, Saturday evening dances for members, a choral society, and fifteen to twenty classes in various branches of technical and literary education. In his book, *Neighbourhood Guilds*, he writes: "The very name, Neighbourhood Guild, suggests the fundamental idea which this new institution embodies: namely, that irrespective of religious belief or non-belief, all the people, men, women, and children, in any one street, or any small number of streets . . . shall be organized in a set of clubs, which are by themselves, or in alliance with those of other neighbourhoods, to carry out, or induce others to carry out, all the reforms—domestic, industrial, educational, provident, or recreative—which the social ideal demands." Here is no mere imitation of Toynbee Hall. His Neighbourhood Guild was different in kind, and characteristically different: an organic concept and a democratic concept, the two persistent characteristics of all his thought.

He was pioneering in a field in which the initiative has now largely passed to the public authorities. More than that, he was a socialist with a comprehensive outlook upon the national life, not following doctrinaire abstractions nor sectional interests nor research theses, but working from the bottom upwards, generating and stimulating the ethical demand for reforms which would meet the actual needs springing from the lively expansion of a genuine community life. His socialism was kept green by its idealistic-realistic substance to the end, and in the later seasons of his life was never yellowed by cooler winds of doctrine. The stimulus of his approach and the contagion of his energies he imparted to those with whom and for whom he worked, and in the eagerness of his imagination this was the regeneration of England.

This work which he initiated, inspired, and helped to build up went on in other hands as he was drawn more deeply into the work of organizing and addressing Ethical Societies which during this period, 1891-1914, were formed in various parts of London. As organizing lecturer of the West London Ethical Society, from 1894, he drew large audiences, first in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, then in the Town Hall, Kensington, and finally in the place where

he most fully developed his mind and purpose, the Ethical Church, Bayswater. He was at the height of his powers and these were productive, expansive years. In the outside world of public affairs he identified himself particularly with socialism and with women's suffrage, working with the Fabians and standing, unsuccessfully, as Labour candidate for Wakefield in 1906. In the cause of women's suffrage he worked with his wife, for in 1899 he had married Adela Wetzler, who had come to this country impelled by forebodings of the course of German militarism. Within the Ethical Movement he promoted the formation of the Union of Ethical Societies and edited *The Ethical World*, at first a weekly and later a monthly journal serving an active and growing movement. One of the first acts of the Union of Ethical Societies was to call a conference out of which emerged the Moral Instruction League which, mainly under Coit's leadership, in some seventeen years of active propaganda showed what might be done in the schools to give secular moral training. The League gained great influence here and abroad and came very near to establishing secular moral education as the official policy of the Board of Education, a success which would have anticipated the 1944 Act by depriving Christians of the better half of their case for the teaching of religion in schools.

Coit was always mindful of the need to attract to the service of the Ethical Movement men of first-rate intelligence, character, and attainments. He recognized that its future depended upon the ability of the movement to support such leaders and lecturers. From the first, he associated with himself some of the most distinguished members of the universities in an appeal to the public for an endowment fund for this purpose. The public response was small, and he was left to draw upon his private resources if he wished to fulfil his purpose; and this he did, generously and continuously. He always had young men working with him whom in the main he supported out of his private means until he could place them in some position in the movement. He never despaired of building up an endowment fund for ethical lecturers, and at intervals, with influential support, he renewed his project.

In 1909 the West London Ethical Society leased a chapel in Bayswater. (Later, the freehold was bought.) In 1907 appeared *National Idealism and a State Church*, in 1908 *National Idealism and the Book of Common Prayer*. These were Dr. Coit's most considerable original publications, which brought his ideas before the public and made him widely known. They were the fruit of his mature thought after twenty years of constructive work with the Moral Instruction League and the Ethical Societies. The



meaning of the purpose which he worked out in the Ethical Church during the following years is to be studied in these books. The first volume, *National Idealism and a State Church*, is dedicated to the memory of Sir John Seeley and is inspired by Seeley's book, *Natural Religion*. His argument proceeds from the premise that society is the source of personal idealism and moral enthusiasm: spiritual insight and moral energy do not come merely from within the individual nor from a supernatural source. Therefore, since this is always recognized in practice, and in our time has been more and more widely and explicitly recognized, if there is no church to stimulate, develop, and apply social idealism, the community will do it through the state: the state must be also the church. The idealism of the community cannot be left merely to individualism, any more than science can be left to casual inquiries: historically, if the church is not effective the state takes over the function of a church. In the existing situation in England, since it was hardly possible any longer for instructed people to hold the dogmas of supernatural religion, the sectarian basis of the Christian religion had disappeared. The conclusion forced upon the impartial thinker was that every Englishman should adhere to the Established Anglican church, and in particular to the Broad Church Party within the Anglican communion; and that he should attach himself to this party in the Anglican church in order to develop the Established church as a vehicle of national idealism, bringing in science, social democracy, and English literature, and throwing out supernatural beliefs. By accepting this transformation, and itself giving the lead through the Broad Church party, the Anglican church would achieve its historical fulfilment in the spiritual union of the people. This socialized religion or religious socialism was an outcome which had been made all but inevitable by the trend of critical research and social development. This consummation, embracing all in the Anglican communion, would reimpose a massive social sanction on church going and church membership, and this would maximize the dynamic influence of ritual, which must therefore be reinterpreted in real terms bound up with the life of the people. The performance of ritual was a living act, not a form of drama, still less of pageantry; it was the appreciation and actualization of moral realities, implanting them in the lives of those who participated. This was its essence, and hence the importance of restoring to traditional forms their vital meaning.

There was a sane and statesmanlike conception in all this which might have had a triumphant success if a strong Broad Church party had had the imagination and modern outlook for

such a venture. But of course the church was not willing to give up its citadel of faith to the eager storming of moral enthusiasts. It has remained equivocal. Coit excited a discussion and in the Ethical Church carried out a demonstration, but without avail. He utterly, and with abhorrence, repudiated the idea of sectarian religion. Whatever it was, the Ethical Church was not another religious sect; it was a party within the national church, an unacknowledged party in the Anglican church. It was, of course, a failure on his part in psychological insight not to understand better what the Christian religion meant to the believer and what the church stood for. But it was that blindness which enabled him to make his bid for all or nothing. It is hard for those who do not share his blindness to recognize the boldness and confidence of his bid. They think that he was merely ritualizing an ethical society meeting because he had a liking for that sort of thing, that he was perhaps childish or nostalgic. They do not see that he was making a bid for national acceptance of the ethical-social interpretation of religion, and doing it in terms of history and institutions with a profound sense of the trend of social development. He certainly failed to understand the psychology of the Christian believer, but his analysis of the religious situation was remarkably bold and prescient. He was seeking to socialize the religious function of the church from within, anticipating, as it were, the taking over of the religious function from the church by the state in fascism and communism. He was one of the very first to turn from generations of protestant individualism, from the private conscience as the supreme religious fact, to the social substance of religion and its collective development and expression. His mistake was in thinking that Christian institutions, disciplines, usages, and modes of thought could be induced or forced into this line of development. It could not have been so clear to energetic aspiring men at the turn of the century that this was a mistake as it is to us now. Also, it should be remembered that Coit was an American, and the English Establishment has a significance to interested Americans which an Englishman would not think of taking very seriously. The American religious statesman sees the theoretic possibilities of the Establishment; without a deep knowledge of the English situation it cannot be recognized that they are not practical politics.

Even to an Englishman in the early 19th century, to the eager, platonizing intelligence of Coleridge, they had seemed to be practical politics when he wrote his brilliant sketch characteristically entitled *On the Constitution of the Church and State, according to the Idea of Each*. Coleridge was opposing the dominant secular-

izing trend of the age, in full tide under the paramount influence of the Benthamite philosophy, opposing it not as a mere reactionary but, like Burke, upon a radical ideal interpretation. Mill himself says of Coleridge and the German school of philosophy, mainly apropos of this essay, that they were the first to produce "a philosophy of society, in the only form in which it is yet possible, that of a philosophy of history; not a defence of particular ethical or religious doctrines, but a contribution, the largest made by any class of thinkers, towards the philosophy of human culture." In his tract Coleridge tries to show that the christianizing function of the Anglican Church is distinct from and subordinate to the permanent duty of the clergy to sustain the ideal unity and improve the civilized quality of the national life, justifying, because fertilizing, the union of responsible status in the landed proprietors with the irresponsible energies and genius of the progressive part of the nation in the producing, trading, and professional classes. He was trying to save the national culture, in the profoundest sense, from threatened disintegration. Like Burke, he was fighting against providence. The disintegration was an indispensable condition of new things. Coleridge's ideas, however, had a strong influence upon the religious conceptions of the Broad Church party, and pre-eminently upon F. D. Maurice. And they were taken up again by Seeley through whom they were introduced to Coit. In the altered circumstances of the times, Coit was able to identify the two functions of the national clergy and adapt the whole apparatus of their Christian mission to their secular moral task, and he could also identify them with the contemporary progressive social movement instead of with the dynamic balance of an ideal constitution. Time was needed before it could be plainly seen that like Burke and Coleridge he was fighting against providence, trying to defeat the wastefulness of nature and of history, trying to substitute resuscitation for generation.

Besides, what Coit did at the Ethical Church in the earliest phase was at the time sufficiently impressive and exciting. His socialized religion was in its immediate expression a religious socialism of the ardent regenerative New Jerusalem type. English poetry and literature are rich in national idealism and its treasures were abundantly available and freely used. The pure ardours of contemporary writers like William Morris and Edward Carpenter and Laurence Housman were localized in the place; musicians like Norman O'Neil and Kennedy Scott, artists like Walter Crane and Vernon Hill and William Poel spent creative talents in its venture. And the social gospel was preached with authority and power: it was a movement which had men like Graham Wallas,



L. T. Hobhouse, and J. A. Hobson amongst its leaders, with Shaw playing an avuncular part. In short, Coit's challenge to the Anglican church was not merely the theoretical performance of a writer who expounds on general principle the function of religion in modern society, and goes on to apply his theory in a detailed interpretation and adaptation of traditional formularies and usages. He went far beyond that: he created the ethos of a new church fulfilling its function in modern society, inspiring, interpreting, and expressing the new society that was taking shape. It was a bid for all or nothing, for if the heaven did not work it was useless; if the church was not socialized for the purposes of ethical idealism, the Ethical Church could not long sustain that purpose alone and must burn out. Neither public opinion nor the Broad Church party was sufficiently moved on the issue to effect a religious revolution; the bid failed; the flame died down: but there had been visible fire, and many had known its light and heat.

Coit had failed in the historical mission of the Ethical Church, but left in his hands he had a laboratory for experiments in the psychology of religion, and he turned to the development of this aspect of his thought. For he had long versed himself in the writings of psychologists on religion, and was convinced that it was possible and necessary to detach the religious emotions from traditional symbols and reattach them to new symbols; he thought that dependence upon and worship of the historical Judaic-Christian God could become dependence upon and worship of the moral ideal, and that in this transference the human spirit would find its proper object, the essential hidden reality it sought. He therefore concentrated on skilful elaboration of the means of public approach to the moral ideal, objectified, symbolized, and expressively celebrated; so that its inherent compulsive power became socially operative and personally effective. This phase of his practical work had none of the creative power of the religious socialism of the earlier phase nor of his work in the Neighbourhood Guilds. He was essaying a task here in which history was against him and not on his side. Whilst he was identifying religion with social creation he was dynamically right, he had greater moral stature, authority, and power than the church itself; he was in a position to turn the money-changers out of the temple and institute a cleansing reform. But to offer an apparatus of theoretical assumptions and psychological inventions in place of the age-old myths and dramatic illusions of the historic church was an altogether different order of insight and temerity. But his attempt was saved from contempt by its being a genuine phase of his lifelong purpose,

the purpose of bearing witness to the objectivity of the moral ideal, its independent reality, its compulsive, saving power.

This purpose, however, he was enabled to fulfil on a higher plane and with the fullest justification by his discovery of Nicolai Hartmann's *Ethik*. In this work Hartmann unfolds a philosophical argument on a monumental scale delineating the theoretical objectification of the ethical ideal in its manifold variety and articulated structure. It was an application of the new German school of phenomenological method to the realm of ethical ideals, carried out with German thoroughness in elaborating and sustaining distinctions. But there was an imaginative passion and moral enthusiasm in the concrete core of the work which raised it above the ordinary philosophical treatise and put it amongst the great works on ethics. The ethos of the work appealed to Coit irresistibly, and the philosophical structure and metaphysical principles of the argument offered an impressive exposition and massive defence of his lifelong intuitions and daily moral witness. Here was a commanding systematic theoretical exposition of his life's mission, and he set to work to translate it into English. Some fifty years after his student days in Berlin, this task was for him a *tour de force*; but he carried it through with splendid zeal and outstanding success. The translation communicated the thought and vision of the author and carried the impress of the translator. It was the consummation of his life's achievement. There was nothing else to do.

It was at this time that his wife died; and he looked round for a successor at the Ethical Church and began to think of withdrawing. He gave up his house in Hyde Park Gate and spent more of his time at Birling Gap, improving to his mind his property there, working impetuously and empirically as foreman of his own gang of men. In time he transformed to his liking the bungalow on the edge of the cliff and was ready to live there at ease, playing the host most of his days to perfection, as he had always done, and having the company and support of his daughter Adela. Then war came. Evacuees and other responsibilities overtaxed Adela Coit and she developed tuberculosis. The household removed to Malvern, and later in the war returned to Birling Gap. By this time Dr. Coit had developed some of the ailments which old age rarely altogether escapes, and the Lanchberys, the old butler and his wife, were also ailing. In February, 1943, Mrs. Lanchbery died; in August, Adela. Coit lived on, faithfully nursed and managed by old Lanchbery. He lived in this final stage like a philosopher. He suffered a good deal of inconvenience, but little pain. There was no trace of the explosiveness of his

temperament. The storms had died away and it was infinitely calm. He sat and mused interminably, looking out over the Channel towards the occupied Continent, keeping himself content. He died suddenly in the night of February 15th, 1944.

Personally, Coit was a little above middle height, showing in his sedate mien a fastidious and masterful disposition. His temper was persistent, energetic, excitable; his temperament nervous and extravert. He had an aesthetic flair and loved arranging and rearranging. He was dramatic in all his personal intercourse, but he did not bring a platform manner and public oratory into his private life; he did not address his friends as a public meeting: he addressed a public meeting as his friends. He had a good mind, strongly intuitive, a character fixed by a key word never long from his lips—insight. Insight into evil not less than into good. A phrase he frequently used, "Alert as the devil," spoke of his seldom-relaxed lookout to detect and thwart the evil in others—force, fraud, and manifold vanity. He continuously practised this perpetual moral judgment which he preached as the safeguard and preservative of sane (another key word) human relations. This belief in the equal capacity of everybody to discern and respond to what-ought-to-be was the ground of his faith in democracy; and *this faith on this ground was the essential teaching of his life*. First and last he was an ethical democrat. Because he believed in a fundamentally equal capacity for moral judgment in all, he was able to disregard differences in education and to believe genuinely and eagerly (as his fellow Fabians could not) in the capacities of the working class for leadership and government, or, at the least, for choosing and controlling their rulers. He records that Mr. Bernard Shaw said to him after an address to a working-class audience: "You should not speak to English working men as if you thought they were your equals. You are the only man of your class in England who does so. It makes them suspect your sincerity; for they know that they are not your equals." This was comment on a mere matter of tact, perhaps, but it reflected a serious persistent flaw in Fabian Socialism from which Coit, less sophisticated, was free.

It is easy to understand why he was specially successful with children, with young men, and with working men. There are many whose lives have been vitally affected by his impact, and who are glad to speak of it, remembering him humorously and shrewdly in expressing their affectionate gratitude.

H. J. BLACKHAM



## HUMAN PERSONALITY

**T**HEISTS often affirm that there is no basis for the value of human personality without a god figure in whose mind each individual is an eternal reality. It is difficult to conjecture what the humanist who does not believe in a god should value if it is not human personality. The idea of God is a creation of man; as Samuel Butler put it, parodying Pope, "an honest God's the noblest work of man," and it would be an anomaly, surely, to reverence an idea and not the mind that created it. In practice, the humanist almost invariably holds human personality in tender regard, more so than is the case with the Christian whose belief in the ineffable worth of the human personality is more in the nature of an abstraction than a reality.

There are very real difficulties, however, in connection with an acceptance intellectually of the worth of human life, particularly individual human life. There is a vivid contrast here with emotional attitudes in which it is easy to feel at one with the whole of mankind, and that is why expressions of the ideal of universal brotherhood, whether by Jesus, Rousseau, Whitman or hundreds of others, awakens such a ready echo in the hearts of men. Emotionally one accepts the worth of every human person while intellectually one quarrels with it. The emotional feeling is, of course, abstract in quality. The person who very faithfully feels such thoughts about mankind in the abstract mass may have very real difficulties with some of the personalities with whom he comes in contact.

The Christian, at least in theory, accepts the value of each human soul whether that soul be housed in an idiot or criminal type, or in a highly beneficent type. You get therefore the care of the idiot and the criminal, apart from a few who commit such heinous offences as murder, and the upkeep of the aged long after they have finished serving any useful purpose in the community. But there is no difference between the commonalty of Christians and humanists in these views, in fact it is frequently the case that the humanist and the rationalist hold views quite as emotional as those of the Christian.

Supporting the emotional views of the equality of human personality common to Christians and humanists alike are the industrial needs of the community, which have probably had a marked effect on the acceptance of Christian ethics. With the leaving behind of the nomadic foodgathering stage of human existence and the adoption of a life in settled communities with the introduc-

tion of repetition work in the form of agriculture and other industries such as mining, there became plenty of work for persons of limited intellectual capabilities. Specialization became greater and almost anybody could be usefully employed. Greater production made it comparatively easy to keep the aged, too.

Evolution presents real difficulties to the idea of human worth, particularly individual human worth. A generation is only one of tens of thousands, and at different stages along this lengthy chain there are marked developments, so marked in fact that there is no community of interests between different links in the chain; a new type of man like a new car model, once it is produced, quickly replaces its predecessors. Up till recently, the last century or two, the time scale was usually reckoned in thousands, if not hundreds, of years. The early Christians thought that the term to be put on Christ's kingdom on earth was a thousand years. There did not seem any sense in life's going on after such a long period. With this time-scale the earth did seem a place where man was at home and belonged. One was only one of twenty or thirty generations, of which one could personally know four or even five, and by tales hear details of many others which gave shape and substance to their lives. To-day, with the millions of years that lie behind and ahead, the very mountains and oceans are not secure. There is no reason even to believe that there is not a term to be put upon the human life itself. Man is one of an endless series of nothings in an infinity of space. It is a bare prospect.

On the other hand the ancient with his small time scale was not any happier. He was quite convinced that it was not this earth or anything like it that he wished to spend his eternal life upon. There was nothing credible too about the visions he conceived of his paradise. It was simply life on earth without the difficulties that go with it. It is an attitude of regression, the only unusual factor being that the deity was conceived in paternal in place of maternal form. It is an attitude comparable to that of the child who thinks, "O Mama, take me away from all these cruel boys into a world where I can be a successful and clever boy."

The idea of a deity, particularly an all-knowing one, has many repulsive features. The comprehensive mind would be like a super-government department with no humanity. It would be disagreeable to be comprehended by such an organism. One would be inclined to say, "take my name off your books," if one had the opportunity. A relationship with an all-intelligent mind would be unsatisfactory. Man is an adventurer and a creator, at least when he is a happy man, and the static quality of a super-intelligence

would be uncongenial. When one meets a great personality with qualities far above one's own it is the fact that he is a man with limitations, breathing the same air, and subject to at least some of the same errors as oneself that makes the relationship enjoyable. On a higher plane of efficiency he is doing and trying to do the same thing as oneself. Most of our ideas are bound up with the idea of achievement and this is impossible in a static being. An encounter with such a being would be anything but pleasant and would raise the question of the profitability of one's own existence; as John Katz puts it, if everything you do and can do has existed for all time in the mind of God, "Is your life journey really necessary?"

In spite of the colossal time-scale of human life the one thing that is most noteworthy is the importance of each link in the chain and the sense of timing. One might imagine that with the millions of years that lie behind and ahead it would not matter very much what one particular generation did or did not do. But just as it would be impossible to market a machine built to the specifications of a design of a year or two earlier, everything that takes place must be just so. One has a part to play on the world stage of eternity and that part must be played correctly and the timing must be exact. The entrances and exits must be timed and the manner appropriate to the occasion. There is no second performance and a cue missed is an opportunity gone for ever. This infinity of material for performance is one of the remarkable factors of evolution and is one that can be offset against the difficulties of the performance.

Within a society the individual with very limited capabilities can have a really important part to play none the less. A play would be impossible to stage without the small character parts and the walkers on. Similarly on the stage of life all sorts of jobs are needed to keep the society going though seemingly unimportant in themselves. This does not, however, appear to justify the criminal type, both great and small, and those whose mental capacities prevent their being of any use to the community. They are victims of the evolutionary process that needs an infinity of variation; to get useful types, it is necessary that useless ones should also be produced.

Although within a society the worth of the individual is definite in spite of limitations of capacities, not all societies are apparently necessary. With the evolution of man there has been an endless displacement of types by others more fitted to survive. Just as a motor car of the year before's design cannot be successfully marketed though quite a practical vehicle in itself, some slight modifica-



tion in philosophy, technique of production, political set-up, or temperament, sets new standards for nations to achieve. This falling away of peoples seems a sad consummation and conflicts with the emotional feeling of equality and the notion of the all-embracing character of human life, but in real life the conflict is not so sharp as it may appear to the contemplative mind. The peoples who are to make way have renounced life long before it is lost. It is what a nation does with the whole of its life that determines whether or not it will survive. As for the individual of one of the departing peoples he has what everyone else has got, life itself, while it lasts. His individual life is probably not more unsatisfactory than that of many in more successful nations.

Having agreed that there is nothing better than life itself and the living of it, and that of life in general, human life is the highest form, it must not be supposed that all the difficulties have been cleared away. The injunction to live to the best of one's capacities individually and collectively does not do away with the problems of the frustrations that are inherent in life itself. Although each generation has a task and a unique task to perform it does not mean that the way will be easy to find or even that it will be found. There may be a standstill, or even regression, for a period lasting from a year or two to centuries. The experience of the inter-war years was one of frustration. It may not have been a period of dead loss, but it was certainly one in which the future perspective was undefined. Apart from collective failures there are the individual failures to reckon with. There are bound to be heaps of cases of maladjustment and frustration even in the most prosperous times of prosperous peoples. Admitting that the religious attitudes of theists are regressive in character, their greatest justification is the inevitable regression that must occur in large numbers of men. If a person is to be in such a state that he must think like a child, why should he not have a childish form of religion? Being grown-up beyond one's mental age and strength throws a heavy burden upon the spirit. In so far as we can by individual and collective policies assure more successful living we can lessen the need of regressive forms of religions, but of any outright victory there is no hope.

The churches like the Communists thrive on misery. It is a wicked world, both say, throw yourselves into our arms and all your troubles will be resolved. It will always take a good deal of courage to stand out against such appeals. M. L. BURNET

## REVIEW ARTICLE

### *Light on the Vatican*

IN this post-war world which looks so frighteningly like a pre-war world, the international strategy of the Vatican is one of the most important and least understood factors for peace—and for war. There, in the global organisation of the Catholic Church, is a solidly entrenched “third force,” openly hostile to Communism and the Soviet bloc, hostile, too, though in a less obvious manner, to that other “Third Force” of democratic socialism of which so many progressives dream and speak, and an ally only to those who further the interests of its “spiritual” power. But how many people—adversaries, neutrals or friends—have a clear idea of the range and methods of the Church in the political field? Ignorance, indifference, muddled thinking, blind loyalty and blind enmity together have provided a thick smoke screen.

During the 19th century, the position of the Roman Catholic Church had become weakened alike in diplomacy, in party politics, and in intellectual life. The breaking up of the remnants of feudal societies with their traditional hierarchy, the surge of popular education, the impact of modern science, the influence of liberal thought (in the widest sense of the word), the rise of trade-unionism and socialism with their effects on the standard of living of the working-classes: the whole development of modern society in Europe and part of America attacked the ancient fears, taboos, and codes which tied individuals to the Church in which they had been brought up. Particularly among the educated people in Protestant countries, the work of the historians who investigated the political role of the Church in the older society made a great impression, still felt in our days. The general result was that “progress” seemed to be equivalent with the destruction of “superstition,” and that, optimistically, non-Catholics took a more or less automatic disappearance of the “medieval” elements in Catholicism for granted.

The leadership of the Church adjusted its methods accordingly. In countries where a modern bourgeois democracy was definitely established, Catholic parties played their role in parliament, with an appropriate dash of liberalism where necessary, but also with a notable anti-capitalist programme designed to appeal to the old artisan class, the peasantry and the workers. Where an absolutist régime was clearly doomed, Catholic politicians took part in the building of a modern constitution and endeavoured to safeguard the Church’s interests against secularist onslaughts. Where trade union movements proved powerful, rival Catholic trades organisa-

tions were set up. Where the peasantry was stubbornly hostile towards the industrialised and "godless" parts of their country, the Catholic organisations worked hard to turn the rural communities into strongholds of the old social order—with considerable political influence. During this period of adjustment, which, roughly speaking, lasted till the First World War, the international policy of the Vatican was unobtrusive and seemed mainly concerned with Concordats and generally with legislation affecting the hold of the Church on family life and education: the Vatican was on the defence.

The accumulated effect of this adaptation and reorganisation of the Church was felt in the years between the two wars. The Catholic parties slipped into new roles in the progressive Republics set up after the disruption of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, without any difficulty. In the Protestant countries, the militant criticism of the last century sounded outdated. Catholic converts among the intellectuals were not infrequent, precisely because by then the Church appeared free from the sordid everyday intrigues of political power, and because rebellion against the mechanised, "soul-less" society took on an individual and spiritual shape, with aesthetic trimmings, if the jaded, disillusioned highbrow made his "act of faith." There was also, increasingly, the attraction of the ancient community of the Church, with its immutable basic teachings and its sheltering discipline, at a time when social responsibility became a heavy burden on weak shoulders and conflicts became more and more difficult to evade. By the time it was clear that the Vatican under its Secretary of State Pacelli conducted an active, not to say aggressive, foreign policy—at the time of the Spanish War—the indifference of progressives in this country towards the activities of the Catholic Church prevented them from diagnosing the concerted international moves of militant Catholic groups in Europe and America. It had become a habit to say and believe that the time for great Catholic intrigues was long past. This made it easy, during the Second World War, to court an alliance with the Vatican in the blithe assumption that the Church shared the "Christian values of the Western World" and was therefore a staunch adversary of Nazi-Fascism. (The support of Franco and Mussolini by the Vatican was classified as a corollary of conditions in "Catholic Latin countries" and silently overlooked.)

In the wake of the Second World War, books by historians, essayists and great writers who were Catholics of a high intellectual standing undertook a revision of the assessment of the Church in history and in social life. The anti-clerical works of the 19th cen-



tury were "debunked": the Inquisition had been painted too black, the spiritual censorship of the Church had saved, not suppressed civilized values, while the rationalists of the last two centuries had emptied them of meaning . . . and so forth. Catholic scholars and authors of our generation—at least those writing for an educated public in England, France or the U.S.A.—usually are meticulous in their handling of facts, as far as they adduce them, and ready to expose human errors of Catholic leaders. This gives them a reputation for objective scholarship, and an added authority when they criticise the factual exaggerations in books by anti-clerical writers. It also makes their faith in the Eternal Church more impressive. It is an interesting experience to read last year's reviews in, say, the *Times Literary Supplement*, of scholarly books, essays and serious novels by Catholic authors: the reviewers clearly are non-Catholics anxious to show their sympathy for this new school of Catholic thinkers, and thus endorsing its validity.

This whole current is more important than it looks, more important outside the narrow confines of the intellectual sets than may be expected by the casual observer. It is no good denying that most sensitive, thoughtful people find it urgently necessary to revise and clarify their notions and values—a task more difficult for those who feel the need of thinking out all premises for themselves, than for people temperamentally ready to accept a solid body of teachings and to adjust their ideas to it. In such a situation, the groups with a worked-out doctrine, but elastic method, have a great attraction and an advantage over un-doctrinal ideas, because they appeal to the urge for spiritual shelters, for guidance and transferred responsibility, even while leaving room for rational thinking *within limits*—this is the important point—for those who are thus inclined. In my personal opinion, this is the reason for the influence of Communism in its present shape on many intellectuals. But it is above all the secret of the mounting attraction of the Catholic ideas for despairing individualists, particularly for those who for emotional reasons reject any form of socialist collectivism. The list of converts among creative writers, headed by Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, with the shades of G. M. Hopkins and G. K. Chesterton overtowering them, is remarkable as a symptom. What is more important, the atmosphere created in Protestant countries makes practical politicians of a very different stamp only too ready to co-operate with the Vatican and with the parliamentary Catholic groups in democratic countries.

For, in the meantime, Catholic parties and organisations have mounted a counter-offensive against mass movements which

threaten the existing economic order and loosen the psychological links of working class or peasant families with the Catholic tradition. This counter-offensive is cleverly conducted under the banner of anti-Communism. Under the present Pope, the Vatican uses its "spiritual" authority in the same direction, in extremely efficient diplomatic manoeuvres which avoid the appearance of power politics. Statesmen of non-Catholic countries underrate and disregard the deep-rooted anti-Clericalism among the masses in Catholic countries, mainly because it goes together with social radicalism of a "foreign" sort, and unwittingly help to strengthen the strategy of the Vatican, which labours to make any anti-Clerical current sound like "Bolshevism." Especially the attitude of the State Department in Washington towards the Catholic parties in France and Italy, Austria and Germany—but also in authoritarian countries of every description, Spain and Portugal on one side and Yugoslavia on the other—proves the success of the Vatican's international policy. Among progressive democrats, the good old conviction that religion is a matter of individual conscience is coming to the help of the Catholic offensive: it has become, so to speak, unfashionable and "bad manners" to criticise the Catholic Church as such. Thus we have reached a stage when the infinitely subtle world policy of the Vatican has free play in the most un-spiritual fields, because it has become a public custom to bow before the spiritual quality of the Church, in countries where this Church, representing a minority religion, has no established power in politics.

A very shrewd French-American observer, the journalist Raoul de Roussy de Sales, wrote in his diary (published after his death by Reynal and Hitchcock, New York, under the title *The Making of Yesterday*, 1947), after the death of Pope Pius XI in 1939:—

... "all the liberals in America bemoaned the great loss the world has suffered. He was in their eyes a great liberal because at one time or another he made a few vain remonstrances to Mussolini and Hitler and condemned Communism outright . . . I exhaust myself explaining that if one really wants to fight for liberalism one would do better to count on something other than the Catholic Church, but this is not obvious to Protestant Americans who believe that religion is necessarily a liberalizing force and Christianity a democratic invention. They mix up everything. They want to oppose to the obscurantism of Hitler the very essence of obscurantism—Rome. Christianity, I am

told, is the only thing that can conquer Hitler. I reply that I do not understand: it is a matter of saving reason and intelligence and not souls, because souls will always manage to survive. The world has embarked on a fine course of folly and disorder . . . The irrational is fought with the irrational."

If this dangerous muddle existed on the eve of the past war, it exists and is more widespread—and dangerous—in the post-war world, when authoritarian discipline is fought with authoritarian discipline, and when the consistent anti-Communist attitude of the Vatican coincides with a great current, lending it an additional turgidity. Not to invite misunderstandings, I want to make it quite clear that to me there exist ugly similarities in the international tactics of the Church and of Russian Communism; but the reasons for this Catholic anti-Communism, which is anti-Socialism and anti-Liberalism in a new costume, are in my opinion truly reactionary because they hide under the "spiritual" criticism an inveterate opposition to a transformation of society and to the liberation of minds from traditional bondages.

Yet if this diagnosis of the increased authority and dangerous duplicity of political Catholicism in our world is at all correct, it also includes a bitter reproach to the critics of Catholicism. They have failed in more than one way to catch up with the modern developments. They have failed to renew their analysis of the sociological and psychological power of the Church; they have failed to recognise the deep roots of that power in the sub-rational; they have failed to prove, incessantly, to individual Catholics that they make themselves part of a political warfare against social and cultural advance by their loyalty to their "spiritual" leaders; they have failed to make non-Catholic public opinion attentive to both the changes and the sameness of Catholic policy. They have allowed 19th Century criticism and exposure of the social and political practice of the Church to be relegated to "Victorian" lumber-rooms, despite its valid fundamental findings, by repeating instead of renewing and complementing the arguments. Above all, anti-clerical research has not often enough gone back to the sources, old and new, and stated the eloquent facts in an unimpeachable manner. It has been so easy for the Catholic "fellow-travellers" and apologists to dismiss many anti-clerical books by singling out their historical superficiality or repetition of doubtful presentations of facts, and thus depreciating their sound assessment of trends. In other words,



over-statement and exaggeration by anti-clerical writers has given the Catholic propagandists ample opportunity for so-called objective counter-criticism. There is a wide gap which cries out to be filled, for the sake of clear thinking.

Avro Manhattan's book *The Catholic Church Against the 20th Century* (Watts & Co., 1947, pp. 461, 18s.), would be most timely, had the author not fallen into some of the old traps. However much I agree with most of his conclusions, general outline, and appreciation of Catholic reactionary policy in the individual countries, I feel unhappy about his sources, documentation, and representation of the historic facts. Naturally it is an almost impossible undertaking to trace the ramifications of modern Catholic action within a limited space, and Mr. Manhattan has tried to compress the results of copious studies into crowded chapters. He attempted an outline of the Vatican's organisation and way of functioning, as well as an account of its strategy in the most important countries of its domain, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, France, the Americas and, as a new field, the Far East; he particularly emphasised the Vatican's "cold war" against Soviet Russia and Communism which, incidentally, he did not always distinguish from socialist movements. The climax of the analysis is, in every chapter, the interference of the Vatican in favour of totalitarian or authoritarian forces. Mr. Manhattan's concluding chapter summarises his findings very fairly:—

"This strategy and these tactics, which stretch through decades and work on all five continents, have one single fundamental purpose: the maintenance and furtherance of the spiritual dominion of Catholicism in modern society and throughout the world... As a result, the Catholic Church, in order to obtain its main goal, has to ally itself with certain non-religious forces and to fight certain others, thus entering social, economic, and political struggles in which Catholics and non-Catholics, religious people, and Atheists alike ultimately are concerned."

Not even a militant Catholic would be able to disprove this statement. But the crux of the matter is whether Mr. Manhattan has succeeded in proving that the "non-religious forces" which he mentions as the Vatican's chosen allies are inevitably pro-fascist or fascist, and that the main purpose of the Church goes against a progressive transformation of society. I believe that he proves it, but that he himself weakens his evidence.

Precisely because I share Mr. Manhattan's preoccupations, I have to express my grave doubts about his treatment of historic facts. This is a book for a broad circle of readers and justly wants to be "popular". But it would have been all the more advisable to use only the most incontrovertible sources and to refrain from painting events in "black-and-white". As it is, the wealth of details is a mixture of fact and conjecture, and not all the facts are reliable, nor is it clear what is a matter of documented fact and what of interpretation. In the general chapters about the structure and activities of the Church, there is no clear division between past and present periods. Judgments about countries are put in an absolute manner even if they are highly controversial: "even before Munich, Poland had become a real Nazi Germany in miniature" . . . "as the Pope saw in the soldiers of Bolshevism the arch-enemies of Catholicism, so the U.S.A. and Great Britain saw in them the enemies of their own social, economic and political systems. Some means had to be found to stop the Bolshevik advance"—this latter passage refers to 1943! Political intrigues are told with a bewildering array of details, but dates, names and facts are sometimes mistaken (I shall give some instances later) and secret negotiations are described without indication of sources. Occasionally the picture of a conspiracy reminiscent of old anti-clerical novels arises: not that the conspiracy never existed, but it is represented without its social and economic cross-currents and almost as in a coloured lithograph, and so appears more unlikely than the provable facts alone would have made it.

To explain what I meant by factual errors, I shall quote instances from two chapters dealing with countries with whose history I feel most familiar, Spain and Austria.

It is historically untrue, and does not help understanding, to say that Spain between 1890 and the First World War was a "gigantic prison". It is, unfortunately, not true that the Spanish Republic was "united on anti-clerical issues"—on the contrary, the anti-clerical issues helped to cloak the economic and social issues which underlay them, and serve even now to make an understanding between the anti-Franco groups precarious. The workers' rising against a reactionary administration took place not in 1933, but in 1934, and it was not General Franco who brought over the Moors that time, but General Ochoa. It is an error of judgment not to mention that two Spanish Bishops refused to sign the pastoral which supported Franco's Crusade—the record of the clergy is black

enough, it needs no over-statement. I would query a number of summarised statements about developments in Spain, but this would demand a lengthy argument and does not come under the heading of factual errors.

The history of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and the place of the Catholic Church in its régime, is necessary for the understanding of events after the First World War. Here, Mr. Manhattan must have used more than doubtful sources, for he commits, for instance, the grave mistake of speaking of a new Concordat, concluded in the second half of the 19th Century, which led to a sort of new counter-reformation and to the "handing over to the Catholic Church" of the educational system. The opposite was the fact. The Concordat was cancelled shortly after the Constitution of 1867, and was never renewed till the establishment of the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg régime. The last three decades of the 19th Century saw a steep decline of clerical influence in Austria. The school legislation which introduced compulsory education for children between 6 and 14, with exemption for children in rural districts, was entirely based on secular ideas. Village priests kept their influence through social and political means, but it would be utterly misleading to speak of a "Catholic" educational system in old Austria. Anti-clericalism was—and is—very strong indeed among the workers, but to say that it was the "main asset of the Socialists" after the First World War is contrary to facts. At that time, the Socialists were only too much inclined to take religious indifference for granted, and the young generation, grown up in an atmosphere of free thought, became actively anti-clerical only when the clergy under Seipel favoured the fascist groups, and the traditional laxity of the older priests was replaced by a new religious fanaticism. But it would lead too far to re-trace the evolution of Austria and to discuss all Mr. Manhattan's minor lapses from historical accuracy. One point, though, deserves mentioning: the anti-socialist offensive of clericalism in Austria, which led to the Austrian form of Catholic Fascism and to the corporate State of Dollfuss, was the answer of the Church to a mass exodus of workers who declared themselves "konfessionslos," that is to say, non-denominational. But this exodus was not due to anti-clerical propaganda, it was due to a new way of thinking which arose from greater social security despite unemployment, a new moral concept which sprang from new social ideas. This is relevant, because it explains a fear of socialism, of social transformation, which is active in the Catholic Church and of far



wider importance than its anti-"Bolshevism". But this most significant set of facts has not been clearly recognised by Mr. Manhattan, possibly because he is too much concerned with the diplomatic intrigues he tries to trace.

In a different connection, it seems to me a serious mistake to place the launching of a Christian Corporate State by the Vatican as late as 1931, in the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. Ever since the rise of modern working class movements, the Church and its leaders had been intent on reviving, in a new form, the social doctrine of Thomas Aquinas. It was presented as their answer to "liberal" capitalism and socialism. The Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* was only a logical adaptation of the 40 years older Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, and Fascism borrowed its corporate ideas from this Catholic conception rather than vice versa. It is important to point out this harmony between social ideals of the Church and social ideas and practices of Fascist systems—and to explain the roots and purposes common to both. Mr. Manhattan again oversimplifies the problem and thus lays himself open to the criticism of those who do not share his political diagnosis—as I do—but want to disprove its validity with the help of his historical errors.

The problem of the Catholic Church and its policy in our time is too serious, too fraught with danger, to allow mistakes by those who recognise these dangers. The Catholic propagandists fight with every modern weapon: with crude appeals to superstition where they know them to be effective, and with a carefully documented, scholarly revision of history where it carries most weight. Anti-clericals cannot use the appeal to confused emotions without defeating their ends. They should school themselves to use the clearest critical method and the most unassailable intellectual integrity in their research—and in their popularisation of ideas. Otherwise they will only contribute to mental confusion and to that vagueness which is the arch-enemy of rational thought.

ILSA BAREA

[The argument in the form of a logical disjunction which is printed below is sent by a correspondent who invites criticism. It may be remarked that the argument is a tissue of major fallacies, but some readers may like as an exercise in analysis to formulate the fallacies for themselves]

# AN AXIOMATIC EMPIRICISM

## Charting the Basic Alternatives

- A. Establishing the axioms.

B. Deducing the conclusions.

PRELIMINARY NOTE: There are *either* thing-designations or abstractions (qualities, events or processes, relations), dependent as to their meaning on thing-designations. This chart pertains to the analysis of *thing-designations*.

A. This is an attempt to clench the validity of empiricism (and by implication of rationalism, materialism, and atheism) . . . I proceed as follows. I take anything about me (and all my feeling-events within me) as a starting point and I generalize that everything around me exists somewhere and for some time. Perceiving it as a part of the environment, I pass on from this environmental totality to another ever greater and finally to the Universe, which is, by definition, *the* whole that is greater than any previous one. Now passing from this extremity . . . I come to the other logical end, the pure negation as the contrast to the part, i.e., nothing which exists nowhere and never. Extending the finite space and finite time of the middle, thing-category I ultimately get, everywhere and eternally which is, by definition, space and time greater than any given. Now as the Universe as a totality supreme, something as a part, and nothing as a pure negation of the part are mutually not identical, I put the disjoining *or* between them and so I round out the final alternatives into the following strictly correlated chart. Mark that they have no other middle or outside terms besides themselves.

TOTALITY			PART			NEGATION		
(Aa)	Universe	or	(Ba)	something	or	(Ca)	nothing;	
(Ab)	everywhere	or	(Bb)	somewhere	or	(Cb)	nowhere;	
(Ac)	eternally	or	(Bc)	sometime	or	(Cc)	never.	

- B. Deductions from the chart:—

(1) Categories A, B and C are mutually exclusive; e.g., Ab is not identical with Bb, and Cb with neither;

(2) Aspects a, b, c, of their own category are correlative between them; e.g., Ba entails Bb *and* Bc, and Cb implies Ca and Cc.

ILLUSTRATIONS: Any thing exists somewhere and at some time, *otherwise* it would be either nowhere and so nothing, or everywhere and so identical with (that is, another name for) Universe. That is precisely how the ancient philosophers, ashamed of the anthropomorphism of their fellow-believers, first began to talk nonsense by theoretically subtracting space and time from their until then corporeal gods, souls, and world elements or principles, and turned them into immaterial nothings. This nonsensical state of affairs has reverently been perpetuated by theologians and their hangers-on, the idealist philosophers, ever since.

TO SUM UP. There exist no (Cb) *immaterial* (Ba) objects of philosophical or theological meditation or research, as "immaterial" means nowhere and this in turn entails nothing, i.e., non-existence. Immaterial is therefore non-existent, *otherwise* it would be somewhere or everywhere (identical with Universe), which would mean *identifying* logically mutually *exclusive* (Cb) with (Bb) or (Ab). This finally means that all metaphysics and theology are and will ever remain nonsense (that is, contradictions). And so empiricism (rationalism, materialism, and atheism) is right. Yes, empiricism *is* axiomatic.

## BOOK REVIEWS

TWENTIETH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY. Living Schools of Thought.

Edited by Dagobert D. Runes. pp. 571. Philosophical Library, New York. 3rs. 6d. (English Agent: John Crowther, Ltd., Crowther House, Bognor Regis).

This is a publisher's enterprise of unusual use to anyone who is seriously interested in philosophy and not a trained specialist. The various papers are authoritative, neither technical nor popular, and enable the reader to get the gist and scan the scope of most of the important contemporary programmes in philosophy; he hears some of the shouts and echoes of controversy, discerns some of the affinities and incompatibilities in the movements of thought which are making the current to-day, and feels its pressure and tendency. It is not a book for beginners, but provides material for the orientation of those who want to go beyond general introductions or particular studies. As an American production, the book has an American bias, but there is not the slightest injustice to British or to



Continental thought, and because of the cosmopolitan character of American scholarship and the native vigour of her own schools of thought, America to-day offers a vantage ground for such a survey.

The papers are divided into two parts. Those in Part I attempt to describe and/or justify the traditional departments of philosophy and some more recently developed; there are articles, that is, on Ethics, Metaphysics, Axiology, and the like. (Strangely included in this section, under the title *Philosophy of Life*, is Whitehead's essay *Nature and Life*: surely an editorial aberration!) In Part II the main contemporary schools are expounded: logical positivism, phenomenology, dialectical materialism, pragmatism, and so on. There are two useful chapters on Kant and Hegel as still formative and relevant thinkers. An essay by Russell on the Philosophy of the Twentieth Century stands at the beginning of the section, and is written with his usual verve and usual wilfulness. Presumably to eschew western provincialism, the last chapter is devoted to Chinese philosophy.

Of course the papers in such a collection are not to be read through seriatim; and of course they are not of equal value. But the great majority of them are of real interest and use. The more important papers lead into one another, and together provide a context for the better understanding of the themes of modern philosophy. That is the purpose and the justification of the book. For that purpose, the most useful order of reading would seem to be as follows. Begin with Professor Urban's essay on Axiology. That is the most interesting starting-point from the standpoint of this journal, but it is also likely to be the most interesting and profitable approach for anybody who is not a specialist with technical interests in the subject. Russell's essay should be read next, followed by W. P. Montague's account of American Realism and John Dewey's account of Pragmatism. Then read the papers on Logical Positivism, Metaphysics, and Phenomenology. Lastly the papers on Kant and Hegel. Afterwards, as different examples of personal philosophical poise in the storms of debate, take George Santayana's *Transcendental Absolutism* and Jacques Maritain's *The Humanism of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Such a programme covers half the essays in the book and forms the core of its purpose. Some of the others may not be less well done, but are of more casual interest. The bibliographies are very unequal in value; by far the fullest and most satisfactory documentation is that on Logical Positivism.

The book can be firmly recommended to the serious general reader as an authoritative orientation course in contemporary philosophy.

H.J.B.

FROM MAX WEBER. *Essays in Sociology*. Translated, edited, and with an introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. pp. xi, 490. Kegan Paul, 21s.

Max Weber, one of the formative minds of our time, and one whose work offers to profound study a richer reward than can to-day be obtained from the study of works which have made a bigger noise in the world, let us say, those of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Marx, has not been accessible in English until the recent translation of the first part of his major work *Wirtschaft and Gesellschaft*. This selection now published in the International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction, in the section Foreign Classics of Sociology, is therefore most important and highly welcome. The translation, introduction, and editorial presentation is the work of two American scholars, and although the rendering is most of the way through loaded with abstract nouns in the American academic manner (an infection which Americans have brought back from Germany with their higher education) the formidable difficulties imposed on the general reader are not to be blamed on the editors, but are inherent in the task itself. One thing is certain, the mass of words is not verbiage: the description and argument are perpetually tense with perception, feeling, and thought.

It is not the amazing erudition of the man by which one is finally and ineffaceably impressed; though it makes him unrivalled in exposing prejudices and short views by putting into a universal context the modern instance, the contemporary movement, the current events; and with this substance in his sapience and percipience, and his own eager activity and forwardness, giving him a lively sympathy with young minds and progressives and left-wing intellectuals, he is their unsparing critic and lash—an incomparable tutor, and the good genius of mankind in this age of the ascendancy of immature minds. But the impressive thing is the rare personal quality of the man which emerges from his professional competence: here is a fine disciplined intelligence, a strict conscience, vocational passion—in each case a lesson in what these things really mean. There is nothing olympian, nothing bogus about the man; he is a sensitive, dynamic human being; one feels the truth of things, the unstable equilibrium, the razor's edge, the great dangers and difficulties of which he is profoundly conscious and by which he is not crushed but made intense. What astonishes and excites one in his sociological description is his insight, the inward appropriation of the institution, the ideal, the type, in its tendency and clarified essence. Very often what he writes is more than sociology; it is literature, not in language but in essence. What he gives us

is the pathos of human living seen in social morphology. He writes descriptive sociology as a religious dramatic poet. That does not happen every day. It derives from the tensions in his own spirit, in his own country, in our time, which he objectifies and projects: the result is not unreal, it is spiritual reality. Weber is not a dreamer: with his profound consciousness of the world, he lives the most sensitively actual life. He is German of the Germans, and the tensions within him are at bottom the tensions of German protestantism, German rationalism, and German nationalism. That is why it is hardly possible to read his work to-day without tears, for his fine spirit brings home to one the measure of the German tragedy.

H.J.B.

PATRICK GEDDES IN INDIA. Edited by Jacqueline Tyrwhitt. With an introduction by Lewis Mumford. pp. 103. Lund Humphries, 10s.

The modern town and country planning movement has a complicated history woven of many strands. One of the toughest and newest is made of such urgent national problems as urban and industrial congestion, rural de-population, traffic bottlenecks, spoliation of the countryside; but a new approach was being prepared by schools of architecture and of sociology which preceded the breeding of the present generation of planners, cultivated in a group of studies and using the work of teams of specialists. Of the pioneers none has been more influential than Patrick Geddes, biologist and sociologist, master and inspirer of Patrick Abercrombie, Charles Reilly, and Lewis Mumford, among the best-known names of a younger generation. Not only did he have seminal ideas which have borne abundant fruit, but also he was great as a teacher, as a consultant, as a director of surveys, as a mind and a man; he had the human vitality and originality which saw and did the thing that was not obvious until he had gone to work. His ablest pupils are ever ready to acknowledge in the strongest terms their admiration and their debt.

*Patrick Geddes in India* gives an opportunity of seeing him at work. The bulk of the book is drawn from reports which he made on eighteen Indian cities in the years 1915-1919 when he was commissioned by the authorities to help them deal with planning problems. This unfamiliar theatre of operations exhibits all the more clearly to the English reader his mind and method. There are perhaps many who still regard with aversion the whole race of planners, as high-handed bureaucrats and engineers who rush



in and impose their tidy ideas on helpless and outraged humanity. Such persons indeed exist; they were active in India, and Geddes was at war with them. He shows that the wholesale removal of population from congested areas and the clearing and re-planning of the sites is unnecessary, costly in money and in human values and happiness, and creates even more formidable problems than those it attempts to cure. He shows the patience of a wise mind and sure insight in dealing with the engineer's "simple expedient of drawing straight thoroughfares across the town plan and then sawing them through the town, regardless of both cost and consequence," the "grid-iron" method. "This destructive impatience is, indeed, an old vice of beginners in a position of authority; and their chance of learning the real game is, of course, spoiled by such an abuse of it." His constant theme is teaching "the real game" both to authorities and to the public. What is "the real game"? It begins with a detailed survey, a loving ecological study of all the factors, in their interaction, which influence human living and affect human feelings and sentiments, leading to interpretation, sympathetic insight, and vision, embracing the past, present, and future of the people and the place—a study carried out and recorded by the use of more or less elaborate techniques in the hands of trained persons. "There is a school of planning . . . that investigates and considers the whole set of existing conditions; that studies the whole place as it stands, seeking out how it has grown to be what it is, and recognizing alike its advantages, its difficulties and its defects. This school strives to adapt itself to meet the wants and needs, the ideas and ideals of the place and persons concerned. It seeks to undo as little as possible, while planning to increase the well-being of the people at all levels. City improvements of this kind are both less expensive to the undertaking and productive of more enjoyment to all concerned." Geddes is more interested in the renewal of historic cities than in the fresh building of model garden communities. "Our returning concept of the Region, and our pleas for a Regional Survey and a Regional Service, are thus but renewals of an ancient past. Town planning and city design is not a new science and art but the recovery of the life and thought that created our civilization." This approach comes home to the individual citizen, enriching and enhancing his conception of himself and his sentiment for the place which is his immediate contact with the world, in the past, present, and future. "The measure of the success of a city survey depends upon its appeal to the individuals that compose the city: upon its power to rouse each from his, often life-long, training of seeing himself as a self-interested economic man—and therefore mere dust of the State—to realizing

himself as an effective citizen valuing his life's work, whether this be high or humble, as his contribution to his city, in his city and for his city." This renewal of the basis for ancient and enduring values is the inspiration of the planners of this school; and it is to Geddes, probably more than to any other single person, that we are indebted for the movement of thought and creative effort which has made the problems and needs of our age an occasion and an opportunity for the revival and reinforcement of a concrete humanism. His art was evocation. "He saw both cities and human beings as wholes; and he saw the processes of repair, renewal, and rebirth as natural phenomena of development. His ideal of the best life possible was always the best that was latent in a particular site and situation, at a particular moment in the development of a particular family, group, or community; not an abstract ideal that could be imposed by authority or force from the outside."

Planning in this sense is the reverse of what it is when it comes from the blueprints of the engineer and the orders of the bureaucrat. It is democratic in the most fundamental sense. The main purpose of the planner is to evoke the active co-operative interest of the public, to awaken them to the critical study, use, enjoyment, and improvement of their physical environment and all the instruments and equipment of their social life. The harsh insoluble problems which arise in an age of masses and machines, in a society centralized, highly organized, and consolidated, are tractable in the local field of regional planning. There is the main front of humanism and of culture in such an age: on condition there is a popular awakening.

H.J.B.

ETHICS OF THE GREAT RELIGIONS. By E. Royston Pike. pp. 247, 20 plates. Watts, 15s.

This work contains a clear account of the ethical teachings of the major religions of the world, past and present, and is written for the general reader rather than the student of either ethics or theology. It says much for the skill in exposition of the author that the book can be read cover to cover and not merely for reference, useful as it can be for this purpose, too. It is not a mere compilation of data but a discriminate interpretation of the ground covered. The book is pleasantly illustrated with reproductions, drawings and photographs.

Such a work as this has value in giving a sense of proportion in religious issues, especially valuable to the person who has been brought up in one religion, or in opposition to one religion. A

certain provincialism must attach itself to anyone acquainted with only one god, even if that god be omnipotent. It is surprising that the varied experience gained in administration in lands with many religions has not induced a more realistic attitude in this country to the historical side of religion, though it is true to say that there is a large degree of toleration in England with regard to religion. In a person who has not had an emotional attachment to some body of thought, a religion or something analogous such as a political theory, a record of religions will not evoke any response whatsoever; it is necessary to have felt the emotional force that can be engendered by the holding of such ideas for the holding of them to appear credible. Given this experience, Royston Pike's work will have an admirable effect in maturing one's outlook and in providing a comprehensive view of the religious field. M. L. BURNET

### WELCOME REPRINTS

IDEALS AND ILLUSIONS. By Susan Stebbing. FRIAR'S LANTERN. By G. G. Coulton. Thinker's Library. Watts, 3s. 6d.

To read Susan Stebbing's book is an education in careful and precise thought. The method is that of close logical argument showing up the confusions of thought and muddled use of words in various contemporary writers of repute. In this way we are forced to clear our minds about so-called idealism and realism in politics or about the relation between bad conditions and suffering on the one side and the moral evil of those who cause or permit them and the possible moral nobility of those who endure them on the other side.

It is amply evident that such ideas as the consummation of temporal history outside earthly history, the belief in immortality as in some way buttressing morality, and the valuation of "supernatural virtues" to the detriment of "natural virtues" are all patterns of thought abhorrent to the writer. But it is about the confusions of thought revealed in the writings of those who hold them that she chiefly argues.

In the chapter *The Pursuit of Happiness* one feels her strong sympathy with such writers as Bentham and Mill, despite the fact that "the language they used was downright misleading and foolish." One feels her love of those who have cared passionately for the individual lives of men and women on this earth. This emotion and conviction sustain the intricate arguments and give a constructive ardour to the destructive logical analyses.

She presents democracy as a challenging ideal requiring self-



discipline on behalf of the community of free people and depending on individuals thinking for themselves and caring for each other. She points out how difficult are the sacrifices required of us in peace. They look easy, but "then comes the clash of interests; to surrender my claim, however feeble the claim may be, is difficult; to know whether it ought to be surrendered may need intelligence and imagination."

It is remarkable that though the argument so often centres on some piece of writing which was well known in 1941, but is not so any more, yet the book remains pungent and relevant to-day.

Idealization of Christendom before the Renaissance and Reformation extends beyond Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic circles. Professor Coulton's fantasy has therefore wider significance than that of an attack upon the Anglo-Catholic movement. But that is what it chiefly sets out to be.

A Roman Catholic priest and an Anglo-Catholic curate are translated back into the 14th century, and as a result the Roman Catholic becomes a stockbroker and the Anglo-Catholic ceases to ask, "Who follows the more Catholic ceremonies and form of words?" and adopts the sentence, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" as his standard of judgment.

The book is based upon a wealth of detailed historical knowledge, but obviously the things presented are selected with a view to counteracting undue idealization of the period. The bias is apparent, but restrained by the wide and deep knowledge. If we allow our thoughts to roam across the Channel, then the easy assumption of all we have gained in liberty, humane practices, and less superstitious minds, strikes curiously upon our ears. The scenes of torture are too reminiscent of some of what we know of Nazi practices and also of Soviet Russian methods. Even the material squalor of the 14th century seems none too remote. The more should we cherish our precariously held heritage of scientific thought and true liberalism both in religion and in social policy. Such are the thoughts to which this sketch of another age, written before Hitler struck Western Europe, gives rise.

Despite his bias, there is a sympathetic note in Coulton's brief analysis of the curate. The Catholic doctrine of Apostolic Succession and the Sacraments had allayed his honest doubts as to how he, a very mediocre man, could undertake the cure of souls and influence men for good. "No man need trouble unduly so long as he can bring God's bodily presence into the church by a daily miracle; so long as he is the chosen and almost exclusive channel

for conveying divine absolution to the repentant sinner." Here indeed are doctrines which both for priest and flock tend greatly to the maintenance of a church, and with much spiritual gain no doubt.

VIRGINIA FLEMMING

A PICTURE BOOK OF EVOLUTION. (Adapted from the work of the late Dennis Hird.) By Surgeon Rear-Admiral C. M. Beadnell. Foreword by Sir Arthur Keith. New and enlarged edition. Watts, 15s.

NATURE'S OWN ZOO. True Stories of Nature for Boys and Girls. By C. M. Beadnell. Watts, 7s. 6d.

The late Surgeon Rear-Admiral Beadnell had a contagious, human, graphic interest in zoology and in his many other scientific pursuits. These two books, appearing on the morrow of his death, happily memorialize him. The zest which tells the stories enters into every page of the scientific description for adults, and insatiable scientific curiosity informs the stories written for children. What the author communicates is not merely scientific information but something much more rare, the inexhaustible fascination of the world of science for his own mind, indefatigably young. He is therefore supremely qualified to inspire the studies of those who are young in years or young in these pursuits.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### *The Profit Motive: What is Wrong With It?*

*(The letters below refer to the article by Mr. E. J. B. Lloyd in the January issue.)*

Mr. Lloyd does not state fairly the argument on imperfect competition and restriction of output.

Free competitive enterprise leads to overproduction, or rather (since world production has never yet been sufficient for world needs) to an insufficiency of purchasing power in the hands of consumers; and to the elimination of competition by the formation of combines and cartels. Both these tendencies were plainly and alarmingly operative, here and in the United States, before the war brought conditions of scarcity. Restriction of output, to maintain prices, follows; in which "profit operates as a motive force." One cannot argue that the ditch is not there because it has not yet been reached.

It is true, however, that in a time of scarcity, the profit motive is most effective in increasing the output of material goods. (To

keep the issue clear I leave ethical considerations aside). It is when conditions have improved, with the help of the profit motive, that this becomes (like so many temporary expedients) no longer a help, but a hindrance in the way of social progress. Then other motivation is needed. We shall have to learn, in the end, how to work hard for the general good.

J. MATTHEWS

It is impossible in a letter to take up all the points which bristle in Mr. Lloyd's article and call aloud for refutation but one question of fact I must at once challenge as it is a matter within my own experience as an old trade unionist. It is utterly untrue that for the Trade Union movement Public Enemy No. 1 and the butt for whom they reserve their choicest abuse is the small independent trader. Mr. Lloyd's capital letters and extravagant language emphasise his unreliability on this point, because anyone who knows the Trade Union movement at all well must be aware that it is remote from any such dramatic intensity as having a public enemy and that its interests are rarely involved with those of the small independent trader for whom many of us entertain respect and sympathy. Mr. Lloyd is equally wild and inaccurate in his detection in Government policy of a determination to eliminate any possibility of private profit to anyone. Not only is the Government obviously preoccupied with immediate difficulties which would render impossible the pursuit of any such intention, but Mr. Lloyd would be surprised at the very strong criticism which many Socialists entertain of the generosity which the Government has shown to vested interests, and the financial columns of any newspaper will show that the profit makers are doing pretty well notwithstanding a Labour Government.

On the broad question it is only possible to select a few of the major considerations which Mr. Lloyd has ignored or misrepresented. In the first place it is mere confusion to compare the present post-war state of industry and commerce with any pre-war normal state as though the latter illustrated the virtues of private capitalism and the other the demerits of Socialism, and it would be no more sensible to argue the converse. The greatest brains in private business could not have reconstructed British industry and trade in two-and-a-half years following the greatest orgy of destruction in human history. In the present stage of our social evolution we are not only struggling with a post-war economic breakdown but also doing so with policies which are unstable compromises between the old order and the new. This could only have been avoided in one of two ways: to have attempted to re-establish



the creaking and cracking capitalism of 1939, or to have embarked upon a revolutionary overturn of private landlordism and capitalism as has happened in Eastern Europe. The British people settled this issue at the General Election of 1945 and the Government with all its faults is treading the path of gradual change from private capitalism to Socialism, with all the difficulties that such compromises involve. If in the process, the working of production incentives presents ambiguous interpretations it is surely not surprising. It is easy to be either cynical or credulous about social motives but it is more rational to allow time and opportunity to settle their practical importance in the reintegration of society.

In capitalist society, they certainly receive little encouragement, and in nationalised industries they have had small chance to develop yet. . . . Socialists are not ignorant either of the inadequacy of mere nationalisation or of the dangers of bureaucracy. I was one of the small band of Guild Socialists who in the 1920's not only raised these questions but also endeavoured to encourage the practical small-scale operation of the productive guilds which spontaneously sprang up then. With a rare exception the guilds did not survive the economic slump which shortly followed and also engulfed many capitalist ventures, but while they were going concerns they illustrated several factors of great importance in any estimation of the value and significance of social motives. It was not until the grave crisis of the war that the team spirit, the craft zeal and the productive drive of the Guildsmen of the 1920's were felt again in British factories. Sir Stafford Cripps has also recently proved with the railway wagon turn-round and in other ways that the carrot of "higher profits" or "a bigger bonus" are not the only or even the most important incentives to useful social labour . . . .

All the plausible arguments of the apologists for things as they have been for the past century or more cannot offer any moral excuse for a system which permits the market middleman to exploit, not only his own staff and the farmer but both retailer and consumer at a time of shortage, or at any time for that matter, which compels the workers to maintain a militant Trade Union organisation to prevent the degradation of their standard of life; and which, but for Socialist encroachments, would still allow landowners to hold the community to ransom for necessary housing or communications. When it comes to the point, Mr. Lloyd is compelled to resort to the fly blown plea of "payment for risk." What does this amount to but the gambler's claim to the favourable toss of the coin?—and it has as much claim on the community . . . .

In this present transition stage of British industry there is still adequate scope for the small factory and the independent shop-keeper to prove whether, without exploitation of the worker and the consumer, they can produce better and cheaper commodities and services than the national workshop or the co-operative store. When partisan misrepresentation is brushed on one side, the present complicated and difficult period in our social life will be seen to be the rescuing of the healthy element of personal and group initiative and zeal for constructive public purposes from its past frustrations in sordid commercialism, shoddy goods, and perfunctory services.

We shall not develop the new social ideals and incentives on a universal scale quickly, and certainly not automatically. The conditions for this are a much more democratic and humanised industrial structure than has so far been worked out, even in the nationalised industries, a much more widely diffused sense of ethical purpose in social life—and time for these processes to work. Humanists ought not to be backward looking, as so many of these articles suggest, but rather occupying their minds with the exciting adventure and pressing task of the present and future in thinking out and following the social ideal which beckons us on.

J. HENRY LLOYD

## HUMANISM IN APHORISM

The eager, critical, constructive labour of the mind in liberty is the historical force, the irreplaceable religion. —B. CROCE

No construction, however broadly based, will have an *absolute* authority; the indomitable freedom of life to be more, to be new, to be what it has not entered into the heart of man as yet to conceive, must always remain standing. With that freedom goes the modesty of reason that can lay claim only to partial knowledge, and to the ordering of a particular soul, or city, or civilization.

—G. SANTAYANA.

Life imposes on all its activities an imperative of integration, and whoever says yes to one must affirm all. —ORTEGA Y GASSET

Nothing arises in order that we may use it, but what arises brings forth its uses. —LUCRETIVS

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